Pacific School of
Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

WILLIAM JAMES

and

HIS PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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THESIS

Submitted in the Department of Philosophy of Religion and Christian Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Pacific School of Religion.

Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

34401

PREFACE

Considering the part which William James has played in the world of philosophy, it is strange that so few commentaries on his work have appeared. This may be because he is so lucid in his writing that no interpretation is needed. I have merely attempted to synthesize his thought which has bearing upon religion and in so doing have been suprised to find that the larger part of his philosophy has religious implications.

I am indebted to many for suggestions and help, but my debt is greatest to two men. Professor John Wright Buckham, of the Pacific School of Religion, suggested this study, and his advice and help have been invaluable. My second creditor is Professor Ralph Barton Perry of Harvard University, for without his monumental two-volume work on William James, at least the second part of this paper could never have been written.

PREFACE

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PART ONE

LIFE

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PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Henry James Senior

William James, the First, (1771-1852), was the original member of the James family to arrive in America, coming here from Ireland in 1789. His father had also been named William James (1736-1822) and his mother Susan McCartney (1746-1824). According to family tradition the family had immigrated to Ireland from Wales in the early part of the eighteenth century[1] and in common with other families of this movement were Calvinistic Presbyterians. William James was stiff and unrelenting in his religious ideas, a close friend of the clergy, and a stern moralist. He played an important part in the early development of Albany where he amassed a fortune and raised a large family. He was married three times within a period of seven years and had, in all, thirteen children. The fourth child by his third wife, Catherine Barber, was Henry James who was destined to win a place for himself in the world of religious thought, and to give to the world two illustrious sons, William, the philosopher, and Henry, the novelist.

Henry James Sr. was born in 1811 at Albany, New York. At an early age he developed an unusual sensitivity to religious thought which continued to dominate his thinking for his entire life. It is a true characterization to say that his life was spent attempting to resolve the morbid conflict acquired in early youth. Born to ease and affluence

he had no economic problem and his life was spent thinking, traveling, writing,[2] and lecturing.

Henry James attended school at Albany Academy and while here he suffered the accident which resulted in the amputation of one of his legs. Such an accident would have broken a less valiant soul, but the three years in bed were spent studying for college under the direction of Joseph Henry.

In 1828 young Henry entered Union College as a member of the junior class and for a time lived in the home of Reverend Eliphalet Nott, the college president. President Nott was liberal in his theology and proved to be a disturbing force to the young student, and it is probably at this time that the intellectual revolt against Calvinism began. He was preoccupied with religion and as a result of his interest entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1835 where he remained until 1838. By this time he was so completely alienated from the church that it was impossible for him to enter the ministry so he took up his unique career in search of truth.

James did not break entirely with Calvinism. On the contrary, he rejoiced in it as the highest truth. He was Calvinistic in his belief in the estrangement of man from God and in his acceptance of the doctrines of justification by faith, and salvation by an undeserved grace. After going this far James departs so far from the orthodox faith that it amounts almost to an inversion. In Calvinism men fall collectively through the sin of Adam being communicated

to his whole progeny, and they are saved individually by election. James believed that the individual, the biological man, is innocent and falls because of his pride. His salvation comes when he turns from his individual pride and identifies his own hopes with those of the race. Thus men fall as individuals and are saved collectively.[3]

It was during this period of revolt that James came into contact with two sources which were destined to give shape to his philosophy, namely, Swedenborg, and Fourier. In Swedenborg he found the color and warmth which his religious nature demanded although he never fully accepted all his doctrines. Swedenborgism was used by James as a deliverance from Calvinism but having broken with one system he found himself unable to embrace another. Swedenborg was a religious mystic and dogmatist and as such was far removed from Fourier the social reformer, although there are striking similarities both in method and doctrine. The one needed a social program and the other a metaphysical and religious foundation, so they seem to have been predestined to find union. James was one of the first to discover the possibilities and hailed the combination with great delight. He rounded out his own thought by basing the need for social reformation upon his belief in the efficacy of God's all-redeeming love. James found in Fourier confirmation for two of his own long cherished doctrines: first the belief in the unity or personality of the race where good and bad are matters of the individual's relationship

to the whole; and second, the idea of human innocence. Thus for Henry James, Fourier became the complement of Swedenborg and his belief that a transformation-scene in human affairs, enacted without violence, was imminent, never faltered.

Possessed of a great capacity for friendship, James knew and loved such contemporaries as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendall Holmes, Henry Thoreau, and Henry W. Longfellow. His letters, warmly and brilliantly written, are a revelation of the depth of his mind and the ardor of his regard. He used his friends as foils for the play of his own ideas, extracting from them all they could contribute to his own system of thought and at the same time giving himself unstintingly to them.

In 1840, James was married to Mary Walsh, who proved to be, as Henry James Jr. later wrote, "a support on which my father rested with the absolute whole of his weight".[4] To this union five children were born within a period of six years: William in 1842; Henry in 1843; Wilkinson in 1845; Robertson in 1846; and Alice in 1848. Because the father's vocation permitted him to spend a large part of his time with his family, his household became a closely knit unit, the bonds of which were never broken, even after the children had left home for various parts of the world. He lived for his family in a wholesome way, contributing much of himself to the development of his children.

James is described as being "picturesque and convivial" and although he was rarely understood and even more rarely accepted, he never lost his faith in his gospel, but contunued to present his message by writing and by lecturing. In 1874 his wife writing to the younger Henry in Europe said: "All that he has to say seems so good and glorious, and easily understood to him, but it falls so dead upon the dull or skeptical ears."[6] After his death in 1882 both his elder sons felt the disproportion between his true greatness and the little that survived him. When William received world of his father's death he wrote, "what remains is a few printed pages, us and our children, and some incalculable modification of other people's lives....For me, the humor, the good spirits, the humanity, the faith in the Divine.....are what will stay by me."[7] Mrs. James died in February, 1882, and her husband survived her only seven months. For some time his strength had been gradually weakening and with his wife's death the will to live ebbed. "He prayed and longed to die"[8] feeling that his message had been given to the world and the time had arrived for him to give up his work. An unsung prophet, his life illustrates the heroism which is possible when a strong man bears his witness whether the world needs or not.

But if Henry James were denied recognition because there was nothing essentially new or unique in his thought, he gained immortality by giving to the world two sons--William and Henry. The influence of the father is more

marked in William than in Henry although the brilliant and lucid writing of the latter is a development of the father's literary style. William differed from his father in many ways but for the most part even his differences indicate his relationship. Both father and son were warm hearted, effervescent, holding their friendships with a tender and often expressed regard. Both were impatient and unstable yet possessing wills which drove them to intense application resulting in prodigious accomplishments. Alice James testifies to this likeness in them: "he is just like a blob of mercury--you can't put a mental finger upon him. Henry and I were laughing over him and recalling Father, and William's resemblance (in his ways) to him."[9] Alice ascribed their similarity in this respect to different causes--in the father's case it was a rebellion against control, and in the son's case an infirmity of will and lack of a capacity for detail and routine. In other ways they were much alike: both were fond of talking and were brilliant conversationalists; both loved laughter; and both men were spontaneous with a tendency to embellishment and exaggeration in illustrating their thought.

The two marked differences are to a large extent based upon this sameness. The father was physically robust even though handicapped and the son was relatively frail, being victimized by long periods of bodily disability and neurasthenia. There was more driving force in the father while the son depended more upon clarity of expression and the

strength of his thought. The other difference lies in the fact that the father was eccentric and also self contained to the point of dogmatism. "William was more mundane, more highly socialized, and had more of what men call 'taste'. He had queer ideas but he was not queer."[10] Although philosophically detached, he knew how to cope with the every day world on its own terms. He could always make himself understood and be spirited and free without offending against conventional norms. The father had moments of exuberance and spiritual inebriety while the son was more restrained. Both men possessed emotional natures which were volcanic in their potentialities but in the son there was a more subtle control.

Given such likeness of temperament it would have been strange indeed had their style of utterance not been similar. Both were talking writers using picturesque illustration and vivid colorings in their work. They wrote primarily to express convictions which gives them a tone of conviction and sincerity. Both phrased their philosophical thoughts in the form of literature and appealed to those who would have been unable to grasp more obscure ideology. While both were hard to follow by one not willing to think metaphysically, there is a difference. The father was at times recondite and cryptic but the son, although he might at times be puzzling, was never pedantic. He had a better understanding of his audience and would never have been content, like his father, to give his philosophy to an un-

heeding age.

William James realized the debt which he owed to his father but in his characteristic way he overstated it. "All my intellectual life I derive from you....what my debt to you is goes beyond all my power of estimating."[11] The love of the son for the father was more than filial love--it was an idealizing love. He consciously tried to be the kind of a man which his father was and as a result grew like him in habits, feelings and attitudes. In spite of this William's individuality led him at times to positions which were widely divergent from his father's point of view.

In considering the ideas of Henry James Sr. he must be seen first of all as a critic.[12] He criticized both men and ideas. He never let pass an opportunity to hurl invective at institutionalized religion and the clergy. He disparaged art as being narrowing and not an adequate expression of life. He criticized Emerson as being too little a philosopher; Carlyle for his pessimism and incompleteness; and all others with whom he could not agree. William was more tolerant than his father although he at times used ridicule and diatribe. They both had the same distaste for orthodoxy, distrusting anything which was institutionalized. The younger James felt the same way about science that the elder felt about religion.

In the matter of philosophical thought the father and the son are farther apart although the evidence of the in-

fluence of the one upon the other still exists. The elder James took the road of intuition and conviction. He believed because he wanted to believe, advising that the better part of wisdom is to let negations be fed upon beliefs. Truth is revealed, not discovered, and then can be only imperfectly known.[13] He had also a combination of mysticism and logic and it was this paradoxical union which led him toward an agreement with Hegel's dialectic. William James, trained in the scientific schools of thought, followed the road of empiricism and was a bitter opponent of Hegel although he felt a lifelong sympathy with mysticism. It is interesting to note that in his later years William James conceded a modicum of insight to Hegel. In the matter of scepticism the two men are worlds apart. "A sceptical state", wrote the elder James, "I have never known for a moment."[14] For William philosophy begins with scepticism and must be tested by it. William James was a believer and he credited mystical experience but the difference lies in the fact that the father started with these while the son eventually arrived here.

This relationship in philosophical method does not carry over into matters of doctrine for here they are sharply divided. Henry James Sr. expounded what was essentially a Christian Metaphysic using such terms as creation, incarnation, and redemption as providing insight into the ideas of nature, man and God. His is a monistic dialectic of self-negation and self-recovery, of exile and return.

in this system there is no place for evil as such, it must be regarded as a misunderstood part of the all-inclusive and all-embracing love. His system is idealistic in that nature consists of appearances to man, and man is a creature of God without substance in himself, living by virtue of an impartation or communication of God.

As we shall see, monism was meaningless to William James and he never accepted idealism although he approached it many times. His chief dissent from his father's thought lies in his revolt from the latter's antimoralism. The elder's view was a logical part of his thought since he denied the objective existence of evil. He felt that one should, "Fight evil for the sake of the right,--not to exterminate it."[15] In the younger James such a view failed to strike a responsive note. He felt that the naive sense of the absolute evil of evil was more to be trusted than the aesthetic or religious idea of the complicity of evil in good. He was too sensitive to evil as felt by himself and seen in others to deny its existance. He felt that if we were only able to accept evil as an "ultimate inscrutable fact"[16] that the way would then be open for practical reform such as would be impossible under the more optimistic view. The vigorous yet kindly attacks upon his father's views were undoubtedly an early reaction against them for, although their philosophical paths never converge, in 1891 William wrote that he thought that his father would now find him a more receptive listener[17] than he had been in his youth.

From the vantage point of time Henry James Sr. impresses one as having been an unsung hero--a veritable John the Baptist crying in the wilderness to an uninterested world. He drank deeply of all the streams of thought--criticized them all and retained as his own that which appealed to his own nature. The only original contribution which he gave was his own vitality which illuminated and made translucent his own system. Time, the great instrument of discernment, has largely obliterated his philosophy but the philosopher himself still looms large.

PART ONE

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

1. Grattan, The Three Jameses, p 6.
2. Chief works of Henry James Sr. follow: Moralism and Christianity, 1850; Lectures and Miscellanies, 1852; The Church of Christ not an Ecclesiasticism, 1854; The Nature of Evil, 1855; Christianity, the Logic of Creation, 1857; Substance and Shadow, 1863; The Secret of Swedenborg, 1869; Society the Redeemed Form of Man, 1879.
3. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, pp 12-15.
4. James, Henry, Notes of a Son and Brother, p 177.
5. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 105.
6. Ibid, Vol. I, p 105.
7. Letters, Vol. I, p 221.
8. Warren, The Elder Henry James, p 187.
9. Letters, Vol. I, p 289.
10. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 129.
11. Letters, Vol. I, p 219.
12. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 131 ff.
13. Ibid, p 145.
14. James, Henry, Notes of a Son and Brother, p 235.
15. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 158.
16. Ibid, p 161.
17. Letters, Vol. I, p 310.

PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO

Education

The record of the first thirty years of the life of William James is a record of temporary abodes. Travel was an integral part of the life of the James family and as a result schooling had to be done in a piece-meal manner. If one were looking for omens attending the birth of the first child the fact that he was born in an urban hotel might be regarded as suggestive. His first visit to Europe occurred before he was three years old and lasted for the greater part of a year. The next ten years were spent in Albany and New York where the educative process was both intermittent and diversified. Henry James Jr. suggests that schools could not have been changed oftener if their presence had been inveterately objected to.[1] Until William was nine years old his education was entrusted to a series of governesses ending with French and Russian recruits. After 1851 came a series of schools including the Institute Vergnes, the academy of Mr. Richard Pulling Jenks, Mr. Coe's Art school, and the establishment of Forest and Quackenbush.

In 1855 the family again went to Europe and the boys added to their American miscellany quite as varied and casual a stock of European tuition. The Pensionet Roediger at Geneva was attended for a season and then came a taste of the Institute Haccius. From Geneva they were taken to

Paris and thence to London where they studied under a Scotch tutor. The next move was back to Paris to study under a French tutor until enrolling at another school--the Institution Fezandie in Rue Balzac which was a social rather than an educational project. M. Fezandie was an ex-Fourierist and the institute was modelled somewhat after a Fourier Phalanx. The enterprise proved unworkable and the boys were transfered to Boulogne-sur-Mer to attend the "College" there for the winter of 1857-58. Here William had his first experience of thorough teaching in systematic study and research.

A return to America was made for a year which was spent in Newport; and then another European trip--to Geneva for the winter of 1859-60. Here William entered the Academy which later became a University and studied until summer when the boys were sent to Bonn-am-Rhein to study the German language. William's education now consisted of Latin, some German, excellent French, mathematics as far as trigonometry, and scattered bits of science. In later years he worked hard to make up the deficiencies in his schooling and attained some Greek, a moderate reading knowledge of Italian, and a complete command of German.[2]

Two tastes were developed early in life by William. The first was an inclination toward science. At the age of eleven he chanced upon a drawing by his brother Henry which carried the inscription, "The thunder roared and the lightning followed". William immediately saw the meteor-

ological blunder and tormented his sensitive brother so unmercifully that he had to be disciplined by his parents. At the age of fifteen he received a microscope for Christmas and the intensity of his joy knew no bounds. At Geneva he began to study anatomy for himself and as there was no regular course in osteology he borrowed a copy of Sappey's Anatomie and secured permission to examine the skeletons in the Museum. The second taste was one for art. Before reaching adolescence he was constantly and copiously drawing. During the winter of 1856-57, spent in Paris, where he had been exposed to the treasures of the Louvre and Luxembourg, his interest had been fanned to fever heat.

During the year at Newport William had shown such an interest in art that his parents, who did not entirely approve, undertook to cool his ardor by a trip to Europe. It was during the brief residence in Bonn, in the summer of 1860, that he made the decision to become a painter. Although Henry James Sr. felt that art was narrowing, vain, frivolous, parasitic and not to be compared with religion or science as a vocation, he acquiesced in his son's decision and took him back to Newport to study under William Hunt. The vocational experiment was successful in that it proved decisive. By living for a time with art William found that he could live without it. Probably he turned from art when he discovered that his own ability in the field was limited, for he wrote his friend Ritter that nothing was more to be deplored than a poor painter.[3] Although

he abandoned painting as a vocation, he never lost the qualities or the interest which led him to make the experiment. He retained something of the painter's professional prejudices which led him to suspect the connoisseurship of the layman and to feel the irrelevance and inadequacy of aesthetics. He had the imagination of an artist which when turned to speculative ends resulted in a wide panoramic view of life.

In the fall of 1861 James turned from art to scientific work registering for the study of chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University. This was the beginning of a lifelong connection with that University which proved not only advantageous to James himself but also to Harvard. During his two years of study in the field of chemistry William worked under Charles W. Eliot who later was to become Harvard's distinguished president. These scientific studies brought to light a fundamental quality of James's mind. He was eagerly but impatiently interested. Prolonged application was impossible for him and his power lay more in his exploratory impulsiveness and extreme mobility. Eliot later said of his erratic pupil that he was "a very interesting and agreeable pupil, but not wholly devoted to the study of chemistry".[4] His ill health which pursued him all of his life was no doubt largely the reason for his instability.

In 1863-64 James changed from chemistry to the Department of Comparative Anatomy and Physiology and had his

first contacts with Wyman and Agassiz. Professor Jeffries Wyman was a scientist of note whose range of interests was wide. He was a field naturalist as well as an experimentalist who was vitally interested in the great topics of the day--evolution and "spontaneous generation". Louis Agassiz was professor of geology and then at the height of his fame. James felt his power although his contact was that of an auditor until the Brazilian expedition in 1865. The debt of James to these two men is well shown in his subsequent teaching. His first philosophical problem was that of evolution and throughout his career he held the ideal of scientific purity. From Agassiz he received a strong stimulation of his scientific interests, and also his dislike for abstractions whenever it was possible to think in concrete terms.

On February 21, 1864 James wrote "I embraced the medical profession a couple of months ago".[5] However, medical studies were temporarily put aside in March 1865 when he joined the Thayer Expedition to Brazil under the leadership of Professor Agassiz. James had not taken courses in philosophy while at Harvard but from Brazil he wrote his brother that he had decided to devote his life to a study of philosophy.[6] Sickness and a poor eyesight made him realize that a great deal of experimental work was going to be impossible for him and his latent interest in speculation was aroused. The year along the Amazon was, however, a productive year in that James came to realize as never

before his own capabilities and limitations.[7]

In March 1866 James returned to Boston resuming his studies in the Medical School and serving for a summer an undergraduate internship at the Massachusetts General Hospital. The instruction given in the school was as good as any obtainable in America but it fell far short of what would now be considered a medical education. The emphasis was upon lectures, demonstrations, and readings, leaving the pupil but a passive part to play. James, because of his inquiring mind, rather than to fulfill requirements, kept graphs of his experiments and made drawings from his microscopic observations.

The teachings of Pasteur and Lister had not yet had an opportunity to revolutionize medicine nor were bacteriology and antiseptic surgery yet understood. James seems to have been horrified by the sight of blood on the gowns of the surgeons.[8] Anesthesia had made possible a humane use of animals for experimentation and he became well grounded in the field of bodily processes and functions.

The spring of 1867 brought another interruption to the study of medicine and James sailed for Europe, not to return until November the following year. Several causes combined to bring about this interlude. His health became worse and he entered a period of partial incapacity, suffering, and depression which was to last for almost five years. He could no longer stand hours of rigorous research in the laboratory nor could he read extensively without suffering

eye strain. The permanent result of this period of suffering is shown in his ability to grasp quickly ideas without reading slowly or laboriously and in the fact that he became a thinking and observing, rather than a learning, man. Periods of depression gave him a sympathy for abnormal people although his own nature was too elastic for his own essential sanity to be disturbed or questioned. A second reason for sailing at this time was a desire to perfect his German and to indulge his interest in experimental physiology.

The summer was spent in Dresden and Bohemia. His interest in the art and literature as well as the people of Germany is described with characteristic self-revelation in his letters written to his family.[9] September found him in Berlin for a stay of several months which were spent attending lectures in physiology and reading widely. In spite of weak eyes he seems to have read voluminously--Goethe, Homer, Renan, Shakespeare, Darwin, Taine, Kant, Agassiz, Janet, Lessing, and Schiller. Literary pursuits were varied by visits to museums where his aesthetic nature was indulged by contacts with sculpture and paintings. From the letters of this period we are able to ascertain James's taste in literature and the standards upon which he insisted. He had no patience with that which stressed technique at the expense of subject matter, surface display at the expense of depth, or evil at the expense of good. In short, literature must be not only pleasing but it must also be important and true. A new fluency seems to have come to him

during this period and he wrote incredibly long letters. This was not altogether the result of isolation but a new-found joy in having ideas and expressing them.

Mention has been made of James's decision to study philosophy. Such a decision seems to have been predestined by his early environment and his own temperament and so was not a sudden or passing whim. Possessed of a speculative turn of mind, his approach to all problems had been philosophical but it was not until this stay in Europe that he was permitted to do systematic work in this direction. Naturally enough his early education led him to psychology which at that time was more of a speculative than an experimental science. Years later he recalled his lack of formal training by remarking that, "the first lecture on psychology I ever heard being the first I ever gave".[10] Even though formal instruction was lacking it must be remembered that his preparation was as complete as the limited literature in the field allowed.

Heidelberg was visited with the hope of studying under Helmholtz and Wundt but James discovered that he had arrived at the wrong time and would have to wait a period of several weeks before the lectures began. Once more he returned to Berlin and thence to Geneva and then to France. A letter written on October 5, 1868[11] is of interest because of his reading of Kant's "Kritik" which he describes as the "honestest piece of work I ever saw". The same letter also reveals his first contact with the work of Charles Renouvier who was destined to play a large part in the shaping of the Jamesian thought.

William James returned to Cambridge in November and took his medical degree the following spring. He had no thought of engaging in the practice of medicine since he was convinced that he would never be strong enough to carry so strenuous a schedule. The years 1869 to 1872 were difficult ones because of continued poor health which made it impossible for him to follow any occupation. Few letters were written during this period because of his eyes, yet these years were not wasted. By skipping as he had trained himself to do and by conserving his strength he was able to do a great deal of reading in the fields of neurology, physiology, and psychology. A note book kept during these years shows a record of his reading ranging from poetry and fiction to philosophy and psychology.[12]

An experience bordering on the abnormal[13] came to him during this period which deepened his philosophical bent and renewed his interest in religion. James felt that his sanity had been saved by clinging to great scriptural texts such as "The eternal God is my refuge", "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden", etc. This was the low water mark of his career and the recovery of his balance came from reading Renouvier. In one of his note books under the date of the 30th of April, 1870 he writes, "I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second "Essais" and see no reason why his definition of Free Will--'the sustaining of a thought <u>because I choose to</u> when I might have other thoughts'---

need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate I will assume....that it is no illusion. My first act of free will will be to believe in free will....I will go a step further with my will, not only act with it, but believe as well; believe in my individual reality and creative power. My belief to be sure, can't be optimistic--but I will posit life (the real, the good) in the self-governing resistance of the ego to the world. Life shall be built in doing and suffering and creating."[14]

No mention has been made of the many friends of James's and no account of his education would be complete without that. More detailed mention of this topic will be made in another chapter. Like his father he possessed a great capacity for friendship, bringing to his friends a warmth of heart that was irresistable. He had to a marked degree that almost unique ability to dissent kindly. His letters to his philosophical antagonists, while outspoken in their criticism, glow with a radiant love and affection.

PART ONE

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

1. James, Henry, A Small Boy and Others, p 16.
2. Letters, Vol. I, p 20.
3. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 200.
4. Letters, Vol. I, p 32.
5. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 216.
6. Letters, Vol. I, p 53.
7. Ibid, p 62.
8. Ibid, p 72.
9. Ibid, p 84.
10. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 228.
11. Letters, Vol. I, pp 137-138.
12. Ibid, footnote, p 142.
13. Ibid, pp 145-146; Varieties, pp 160-1.
14. James, William, Letters, Vol. I, pp 147-8.

PART ONE

CHAPTER THREE

Career

In 1872 President Eliot, looking for instructors in physiology and hygiene proposed that William James and Dr. Thomas Dwight, a young anatomist, share in the new undertaking. In August of that year James was appointed instructor in Physiology beginning a service to Harvard University which lasted until 1907. He was now in his thirtieth year and was able to bring to his new position a matured yet plastic mind. Physiology, psychology, and philosophy all attracted him and during his academic career he taught them all. Because of the interpenetration of the three fields the transitions must be regarded as a growth rather than a series of changes. Physiology and comparative anatomy led through evolution to the philosophy of nature while human physiology led inevitably to psychology. Psychology was able to find only its surface explanation in physiology and its deeper implications led him to epistemology and metaphysics.

James was a good teacher, not because of his method, but because of his compelling personality. In the classroom he was unorganized but at the same time exceedingly stimulating. He regarded his first appointment as a "godsend"[1] believing that it was of vital importance that a man should have a fixed schedule of work and responsibility. Teaching

was, for James, a medium of expression whereby he could express those truths which he felt to be within himself. He enjoyed, loved, stimulated, and sometimes berated his students making lasting impressions upon them. The energy which he gave to his tasks enervated him but at the same time the regularily of his duties resulted in a general improvement of health conditions.

The appointment had been for one year only and was such a success that in the spring of 1873 he was offered a larger course at a larger salary. His first impulse was to decline lest he be permanently connected with physiology but finally he accepted although his acceptance was contingent upon his health. As the summer advanced he was beset with misgivings regarding his strength and in October sailed for Europe postponing the instructorship for a year.

In 1874 James resumed his teaching in full charge of "Natural History 3" and "The Comparative Anatomy and Physiology of Vertebrates" which he continued to give for five consecutive years. In 1875 he added a course for graduate students in "The Relations between Physiology and Psychology" and in the following year, a similar course for undergraduates. In 1876 he organized a psychological laboratory and the next year some of his courses were transferred to the Department of Philosophy and given under the title of "Psychology".

In June 1878 James entered into Contract with Henry Holt and Company to write a textbook on psychology. This

work was not finished until twelve years later and was then published in two volumes under the title of Principles of Psychology. These volumes represent the only complete systematic work from the pen of James. Many of the chapters had been published in "Mind" and other periodicals before being sent to the publishers to be put in book form. The work was immediately successful being read not only by psychologists but by laymen as well.[2]

Early in 1876 James had been introduced to Miss Alice H. Gibbens, and the next day he wrote that he had met "the future Mrs. W. J."[3] On the tenth of July, 1878 his prophecy came true and they were united in marraige. Mrs. James proved to be a remarkable woman in her own right, distinguished in beauty, wit, and character. Her influence upon her husband can not be exaggerated. She shared his intellectual and professional interests with loyalty and understanding; she watched over him with an untiring devotion; and protected him from distractions which would have dissipated his strength. With his marriage, James seems to have lost every trace of the neurasthenia which had dogged his pathway and was able to summon strength which he had not known to exist.

James spent the summer of 1880 in Europe resting, and visiting with his brother in London and with Henry Bowditch and G. Stanley Hall at Heidelberg. This trip to Europe is noteworthy because it was the occasion of his first meeting with Charles Renouvier which took place at

Avignon. On his return to the university James was made an assistant professor of philosophy and continued his teaching without interruption for two years.

In the summer of 1882 he arranged with the college for a year's leave of absence, and sailed for Europe again, with the express purpose of not only having a vacation but of meeting some European scholars who were working on problems in which he was interested. During this eventful and fruitful year James saw much of such men as Croom Robertson, Frederick Pollock, Leslie Stephens, James Sully, Edmund Gurney, and Shadworth Hodgson. He developed a warm friendship with Renouvier; visited with Joseph R. L. Delboeuf, the Belgian psychophysicist and philologist; made the acquaintance of Ernst Mach, the German physicist and philosopher; and began an enduring friendship with the psychologist Carl Stumpf. James was too intensely personal to ever divorce a man's ideas from the man himself. It is characteristic of him that he collected photographs and attempted by personal contact and by correspondence to relate men and ideas.

By this time James was well known in Europe through his articles which had appeared in "Mind" and in the "Critique philosophique". "Mind" was edited by George Croom Robertson and was an organ of psychological thought and philosophy of the older British empirical tradition. The "Critique philosophique" was the publication of Renouvier which was devoted to speculative philosophy. American

thought was at this time almost unknown in Europe and James fitted into the role of interpreter. His command of the languages, his entertaining and witty presentations, his appreciation of merit wherever met, and his warm hearted kindness won him friends and listeners on all sides. His reputation was such that a recent European biographer said of him, "Il a pu passer en Amérique pour le plus Cosmopolite et en Europe le plus américain des philosophes".[4] James's patriotism is evident in the letters of this period[5] and the more he saw of Europe and European universities the more warmly he felt toward America and Harvard.

Henry James Sr. died while William was in Europe, leaving to him a patrimony large enough to free him from economic insecurity. He was no longer troubled with ill health nor had he misgivings about his aims and abilities. William James seems to have found himself during the four years between 1878 and 1882. Marriage, parenthood, recognition, and a task to perform gave him a vitality which he had never known before.

The decade following his sojourn abroad was spend completing the Principles of Psychology, editing his father's Literary Remains and delivering miscellaneous philosophical addresses later published under the title of The Will to Believe. This was also the period of his maximum activity with the Society of Psychological Research. In 1884 he organized the American society. In 1886 James was given a full professorship with an increase in salary. He moved in-

to a larger house immediately and three years later built a home in Cambridge in which he lived for the rest of his life. He also began the development of a summer home at Chocorna, New Hampshire, which was to become as integral a part of his life as his Cambridge home.

While the work on the Principles was in progress James continued to experiment with his teaching, changing and adjusting courses, sometimes working through a new course with his students. In 1888 he offered a course in ethics in which he studied with his class accepting their suggestions in the same way that they accepted his. The following year he was in Europe again having been chosen to open the International Congress of Physiological Psychology at Paris. His fame was spreading and the time approaching when he would not be able to respond to all the demands made upon him by the world of scholarship.

The size of the Principles precluded its use as a college textbook so James spent the summer of 1891 making an abridgment which appeared late that year under the title Briefer Course. This book won immediate acclaim and for many years remained the most widely used text in the entire field. Having completed his task James was now ready to give up psychology and give himself to his philosophy. He raised enough money to bring the laboratory up to date and then persuaded the school to call Hugo Munsterberg to take over the courses in psychology. This done, James saw his way clear to take a sabbatical

year and in 1892 he sailed for Antwerp with his family for a fifteen months vacation.

In 1893, at the age of fifty-two, James returned from abroad to take up his duties at Harvard. At his age many men would have been content to rest upon their laurels and continue to work in the field of their achievement. In spite of the time which he had given to a study of brain-physiology and other problems of psychology he was glad to turn his back on them to face problems of knowledge, truth, freedom, and faith. The subjects which he offered during the nineties are indicative of the direction of his interests. He offered a course on Cosmology which he described as "a study of the fundamental conceptions of natural science with special reference to the theories of evolution and materialism".[6] In 1895 his psychological seminar centered its discussion around the theoretical problems of consciousness, knowledge, self, and the relation of mind and body. In 1896 he offered a course on the philosophy of Kant and his elective on Metaphysics given in 1898 was catalogued as a study of "the unity or pluralism of the world ground, and its knowability or unknowability; realism and idealism, freedom, teleology and theism".[7]

During the same period James was doing a great deal of outside lecturing as well as extra teaching. He taught in the Harvard Summer School; repeated his courses at Radcliffe College; and delivered lectures at teachers meetings and other special audiences in places as far away from

Cambridge as Colorado and California. The Will to Believe and Talks to Teachers, both published in 1897, were prepared as lectures and given many times before being put in book form. The year 1899 found him so exhausted that he had to stop for a rest to avert a nervous breakdown.

Two years of comparative inactivity were spent in Europe the only systematic effort being the writing of the first course of Gifford Lectures which were delivered in Edinburgh in May, 1901, which with the second course delivered in 1902, were subsequently published under the title, The Varieties of Religious Experience. In the fall of 1901 James resumed his teaching with a half course and continued on a reduced schedule for six years. He gave a whole course in 1902-03, a seminar in 1903-04, a half course in 1904-05, a half course combined with a four weeks of elementary logic in 1905-06, and finally a half course on "General Problems of Philosophy" in 1906-07. In December 1903 he sent his resignation to President Eliot but the university authorities persuaded him to remain.

With the lightened teaching burden James found time and strength for extra lectures and writing. Pragmatism, A Pluralistic Universe, The Meaning of Truth, and Essays in Radical Empiricism began to appear in philosophic journals or were delivered as special lectures. The summer of 1905 was spent in Europe stopping in Rome long enough to address a Philosophical Congress on "La Notion de Conscience".

In 1906 James took a leave of absence and presented a

course during the spring term at Stanford University. He had long been planning to write a systematic treatise on metaphysics in the form of a text book and he took this opportunity to organize his materials for presentation to his classes. This task was interrupted by the San Francisco earthquake which halted instruction for a time and James returned east. The text book was never written although a part of it was collected and given to the public in Some Problems of Philosophy, after his death.

In November, 1906 the lectures which compose the volume called Pragmatism were delivered at Lowell Institute in Boston and repeated the following January at Columbia University. In the spring of 1907 James resigned from his position and ended his teaching career. At the last meeting of his class his students presented him with a silver loving cup and an engraved inkwell. His hope was to settle down to write his introduction to philosophy but there came an invitation to give the Hibbert lectures at Manchester college in Oxford which he accepted. These were published in 1909 as A Pluralistic Universe.

Home again, James found himself working against growing physical trouble but he managed to collect and publish the material which had been written during the controversy over Pragmatism. This volume was called The Meaning of Truth. He continued to write, his last published article being one on B. P. Blood entitled "A Pluralistic Mystic."

In an effort to regain his health, James sailed for

Europe in the early spring of 1910. He did not improve under European medical attention and so accompanied by his wife and brother Henry, returned to his summer home at Chocorna. Within a few hours of his return he took a sudden change for the worse and on August 26, 1910, passed away.

From the vantage point of over a quarter of a century it seems still too early to evaluate the contributions of William James. In the field of psychology he stands as a pioneer. He is related to this science in the same way that Galileo is related to physics or Darwin to biology. His work is the originative matrix of the great variety of work which has since been done in the field.

In the realm of philosophy James has come to occupy a unique place. He is the "American Philosopher" personifying the best of American thought and is one of the few men produced in the new world that have been able to make the old world take into account American thought. His philosophy has remained fresh while that of his contemporaries has withered. This is because his work was largely prophetic. The world which he argued for is that which the new physics of Einstein, Russell, Planck, and Bohr, point toward. Another source of its vitality is that the man lives in his philosophy, making it a warm, glowing, and fresh attempt to meet life as it is, rather than being cold analytical abstractions divorced from everyday needs. Also we see James himself in the texture and rhythm of

his style which carried conviction because of its understandableness.

James's philosophy is too viable, experimental, and tentative to have become the dogma of a school. It has functioned as germinative of new thought rather than as a standardized system to be followed by others. It is a philosophy of open doors--a larger world beyond, waiting to be explored by one who is willing to venture upon the quest for truth! His mind was fruitful enough to allow him to draw ideas from many sources without fear of contradiction or inconsistency. The result is that today, there are few, if any, pure Jamesians, but the world is full of mixed Jamesians who have a common relationship to him without feeling related to one another.

Turning from the philosophy to the philosopher, we find a warmth of heart which is all too rare. There is no better way to characterize him than as the concretion of unselfish sympathy and understanding. He unwittingly described himself when he wrote, "as a matter of fact, certain persons do exist with an enormous capacity for friendship and for taking delight in others lives;.....such persons know more of truth than if their hearts were not so big."[8]

PART ONE

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. James, Letters, Vol. I, p 167.
2. For impression made by the Principles of Psychology see Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. II, p 91 ff.
3. Letters, Vol. I, p 192.
4. Quoted from M. Le Breton, La Personnalité de William James, 1929, p 35, by Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 383.
5. Letters, Vol. I, p 209 ff.
6. Ibid, Vol. II, p 3.
7. Ibid, p 3, 4.
8. Talks to Teachers, p 267.

PART TWO

ORIENTATION

Chapter

1 . . . . . Science
2 . . . . . British Empiricism
3 . . . . . Early Friendships
4 . . . . . European Influences
5 . . . . . Hodgson and Renouvier
6 . The Struggle with Idealism and Rationalism

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE

Science

Ralph Barton Perry points out that William James started his philosophical quest with certain well defined prepossessions which while too general to be stated in philosophical doctrines, nevertheless directed the emphasis of his thought.[1] These were due to his intellectual heritage, to his earliest experiences, and to the condition of his health. It is impossible to determine the degree of influence of each factor but they are always present and, to a certain extent, predetermine the content of his philosophy.

The first prepossession was his moralism. James could never have been content with a philosophical system which disparaged or enervated the will. The fact that he adopted an intellectual rather than an active career intensified this tendency and he dramatized life, casting himself in the role of a moral champion. The second prepossession was toward variety and change. Being bored by sameness and finding routine intolerable it is not strange that he had no patience with a rationalistic philosophy which seeks for identity and worships coherence. The third prepossession was an artisitic sensibility. Although he abandoned art, James retained both artistic taste and the creative impulse. He always "had the novelist's interest in character, the dramatist's interest in life, and the poet's interest in

nature".[2] Because this sensibility involved feeling rather than reason his philosophy must needs be one which exalts feeling and sensation above the intellect.

The earliest external influences which were destined to shape James's thought were the religious experience of his father, the humanistic interests implanted by literature and art, and the early scientific training which he received.[3] From his father's religion he took the content and rejected the form, for it was the spirit and attitude which appealed to him rather than the doctrines. In like manner he extracted from the field of literature a sympathetic spirit which gave body to his thought and color to his work. Religion as a datum to be held until it could be justified, and a profound sympathy for human life in all its manifestations, made life and reality too warm, rich, and complex to ever be brought easily into a formal or complete system.

Science, the third of the external influences, played a large part in the formation of James's final philosophical conclusions. He entered Lawrence Scientific School in 1861, only two years after the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species. About this same time the principle of the conservation of energy, which had been suggested some years earlier, came into general acceptance. These were not merely scientific achievements, for they had implications which tended to discredit religious thought. Natural selection seemed to disprove the supernatural origin of man, and the law of conservation of energy denied him supernatural capacities such

as thought, will, and spirit. The effect was to make science militant in its attack and to make religion hostile to science in its own defense.

Science had influenced philosophy and "naturalism", "agnosticism", "positivism", "scepticism", "materialism" were terms descriptive of the thought which was current. Although its doctrines came from science, this philosophy was unlike science in that it was characterized by dogmatism and arrogance. On the other hand religion was defended by two leading schools of philosophy although in 1860 the prestige of both schools was at a low ebb.

One of these was the Scottish realistic or "common sense" school led by Sir William Hamilton.[4] This school, which had been attempting to meet the scepticism of Hume, lost its identity and became blended with Kantian idealism upon the death of Hamilton in 1856. Hamilton had met Hume upon the ground of experience, but his followers, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, and Thomas Brown, in attempting to save the philosophy of experience had compromised it by accepting "suggestion", "common sense", and "intuitive beliefs" as grounds for real knowledge. They thus abandoned the empirical basis without accepting the Kantian a priori method and thus fell between the two schools. Although for a time they achieved a wide popular following they ceased to interest first class philosophers after Mill's attack upon Hamilton in 1865.

The other school defending religion was the German

idealistic movement inspired by Kant and carried to its culmination by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Schleiermacher had given impetus to the movement but it had been brought practically to a close with the death of Schopenhauer in 1860. The influence of the school had been felt but had never really taken root, probably because it had been but imperfectly understood. The most effective exponents of idealism had been such men as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson but with them it had been blended with other philosophies chiefly Platonic idealism. Such a defense by men of letters had little influence on the development of technical philosophy.

In Germany, materialism had been developed from Hegelian premises, chiefly by Karl Marx; in France the positivism of Comte was still in the ascendancy; and in England, Herbert Spencer had just announced his forthcoming "Synthetic Philosophy" which was to claim philosophy in the name of evolution. It was against this background that William James sought to orient himself. In later years he looked back upon the philosophy "of the sixties" and called it "crude" and "amateurish",[5] But at that time it must have been a baffling maze. There were three alternatives open to him as to any other philosopher who might be entering upon a career during these years.

In the first place he might have joined the ranks of naturalism; and preached the gospel of positivism as W. K. Clifford did in England, or the gospel of evolution as

John Fiske did in this country. His scientific training and predilections might have led him along this path had it not been for his religious interests. Religion made it impossible for him to follow blindly the leadings of his scientific training and his scientific training made it impossible for him to be uncritical of religion.

On the other hand, James might have aligned himself with Kantian idealism which was just starting its vigorous revival in France, England, and America. In France, Renouvier and Ravaisson were leaders of a powerful idealistic opposition to positivism and eclecticism. In England, Hutchinson Sterling's Secret of Hegel appeared in 1865, and in America, William T. Harris began to publish a translation of Hegel in 1868. These leaders were followed by such men as Edward Caird, T. H. Green, and F. H. Bradley in England, and by Josiah Royce and G. H. Howison in America. Most of these men became personal friends of James but he refused to identify himself with idealism.

The last alternative which presented itself was British empiricism. Starting with Bacon and developed by Locke it had been carried on by Berkeley and Hume. The scientific movement and the efforts of John Stewart Mill had given it new life and influence. Because of the self-destructive criticism which it had suffered at the hands of Hume, and because of the rising tide of naturalism, the tradition was in grave danger of being brought into disrepute. It was with this tradition that James aligned himself. With Renou-

vier and Hodgson he set himself to the task of saving empiricism from its threatened destruction.

Biology was taking the place which had been held by other sciences and was, through the concept of evolution, directing cosmological belief. Having a naturally philosophic turn of mind, and an early training in the biological sciences, it is small wonder that from the very first James felt that he was destined for a speculative life. That he chose empiricism was due to the fact that his biological training introduced him to observation and experiment. He judged theories not by their logical consistency but by their verifiable factual relevance. James had an antipathy to mathematics and formal logic so the scientific method, as he knew it, pointed him toward empiricism.

Herbert Spencer was at the highest point of his popularity during the early years of James's career. James read the First Principles before 1862 and was carried away with enthusiasm but when he later used it as a textbook his verdict was unfavorable.[6] By 1892 he was calling Spencer's work "almost a museum of blundering reasoning".[7] He admired Spencer's attempt to create a system but he was impatient with his lack of artistic sentiment, and his mechanical and flat portrayal of his ideas. The textbook James used in 1879-80 was heavily underscored and such marginal comments as the following are scattered through the book: "absurd", "delicious", "trebly asinine", "curse his metaphysics", "the ass", "damned scholastic quibble", "good God", and so on.[8]

Spencer sought to explain the operation of the mind as he had explained the bodily life, as an adjustment to environment, or an adjustment of inner to outer relations. James agreed that the idea was sound in so far as it expresses the fact that the mind inhabits environments which act upon it and upon which the mind reacts.[9] However James could not agree that the mind submissively reflects or re-echoes the external environments. The external world does mold the mind in a peculiar and distinct way but mind, as such, is an active, rather than passive, agent, which changes the environment at the same time that it is being changed.

The lecture notes which James used, in teaching philosophy with Spencer as a text, are still extant and his criticism of the English philosopher is easy to trace. He examined Spencer's famous definition of evolution: "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation". James felt that Spencer was guilty of loose thinking in that he transposed an idea from one context to another and made generalizations which were in reality only ambiguities. For instance, when Spencer says that "evolution is a change from....indefinite to the definite....from confusion to order....from undetermined....to determined arrangement", he has no meaning which

we can grasp. Indeterminateness is a mental state; the original cell was simple but not indefinite; and a motion cannot be indefinite. James proposed the following restatement as being essentially all that Spencer put into his definition: "Evolution is a change from a no-howish untalkaboutable all-alikeness to a some-howish and in general talkaboutable not-all-alikeness by continuous sticktogetherations and somethingelseifications".[10]

James's most sever criticism was directed against Spencer's "Unknowable". He found it to have a dozen vague and inconsistent meanings. He felt that the philosopher was hiding his own imperfections and weaknesses behind his concept of the "Unknowable". Certainly, there is mystery in the world but that is the unknown which lies outside of, and is continuous with that which is known. It would be more reasonable to postulate a "more to be known". There is no reason for transcending the world of phenomena merely to satisfy some theoretical "sentiment of rationality". There would have been no objection had Spencer postulated a rational world transcending this imperfectly rational one, but Spencer sets up one which is irrational and unknowable. Spencer had provided in the Unknown what he thought was a suitable object of religious faith, but this James denies. Mere existence can command no reverence or any other emotion until the quality of that existence is specified.

So, in the final analysis, James rejected Spencer's

evolution in the name of religion. His philosophy satisfies the desire for unification but does not meet the needs of religion. Then, James also felt, despite Spencer's claims to the contrary, that his theories were essentially materialistic because of their negations.

This, in brief, was James's reaction to the scientific currents of thought with which he had widest contact during his formative years. Evolution, because of its importance at that period, occupied a large part of his time but a list of the subjects to which he called his students' attention shows the wide range of his interest. These topics were as follows: Infinity, Continuity, Life, Spontaneous Generation, Heredity, The Nebula Theory, Atoms, Matter, Force, Conservation of Energy, Cause, Teleology, Religion and Science, Evolution of Society, Space, Time and Motion, Evolution of the Mind, Evolution of Man, Law and Design, Evolution and Morals, Evolution and Religion, Laws of History, and Panpsychism.[11]

A major interest for James was the automaton theory. His scientific studies had led him to believe that man is a conscious automaton. According to this theory human behavior is determined wholly by the stimuli which pass through the sense organs to the central nervous system and out again through the muscles. Consciousness is present but has no part in determining the behavior. By the time of the writing of the Principles, James had changed from automatism to inter-actionism. On scientific grounds, he

argued that since we know mind better than we do the nervous system it is folly to base the psychological science upon physiology. However it was on moral and religious grounds that he most vigorously espoused interactionism. "The willing department of our nature....dominates both the conceiving and feeling department;...perception and thinking are only there for behavior's sake."[12]

Darwin, Wyman, and Agassiz each contributed to the molding of the thought of William James but in spite of his exposure to naturalism he never accepted that philosophy. This was due to his religious prepossession, but he was equally critical of traditional theism. "Common sense" realism had no appeal and although he was interested in idealism he never accepted it. His impulse was to substitute panpsychism for materialism but he never whole-heartedly committed himself to that position unless his last work which appears in Some Problems of Philosophy brings him to that position. This role, of sampler, yet critic, of all, was typical of James. He tasted all but his own originality refused to let him accept any without reservations. As with philosophical systems, so also with science, he appreciated and used its methods and results, but none knew better than he that science has some serious and inherent limitations.

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

1. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 466 ff.
2. Ibid, p 467.
3. Ibid, p 467 f.
4. Ibid, p 463 f.
5. A Pluralistic Universe, p 4 ff.
6. Memories and Studies, p 127 f.
7. Ibid, p 128.
8. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 483.
9. Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, p 6.
10. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 482-7.
11. Ibid, Vol. I, p 490 f.
12. The Will to Believe, p 114.

PART TWO

CHAPTER TWO

British Empiricism

Of all the streams of thought which converged upon William James the only one with which he admittedly identified himself was the empirical school which was founded by John Locke but which has its roots in Duns Scotus and Bacon. He regretted that the building out of a critical philosophy had been left to the followers of Kant with his circuitous and ponderous artificialities, for the English spirit in philosophy "is intellectually, as well as practically and morally, on the saner, sounder, and truer path".[1]

This is not to be taken to mean that James accepted uncritically the conclusions of the empiricists. He did however see in empiricism the potential relief from the sceptical, positivistic, and materialistic negations of which it had been accused. His role was to save the tradition from within rather than to secure aid from the opposing schools. Hume had, James felt, made mistakes by a failure to see the possibilities of his own position. It was in the spirit of a reformer from within that James entered the ranks of the British thinkers.

John Duns Scotus, (1265-1308), had prepared the way for the empiricists by his separation of revealed theology and philosophy, thus undermining the scholastic system of thought. He had inferred the existence of God from his

works using what later was called the a posteriori method. William of Occam, (1280-1347), who had been a pupil of Duns Scotus at Oxford, developed a nominalism in his belief that only particulars exist, and that our knowledge begins with particulars. Francis Bacon completed the destruction of scholasticism by his instauration. The past was to be forgotten, for its methods, foundations, and results were all wrong and had accomplished nothing. Philosophy must begin anew and rebuild human knowledge upon a firm and solid basis. All knowledge, except revelation, is derived from sensation and only particulars exist. Bacon, in spite of his insistence to the contrary, failed to break entirely with the past and his empiricism was not consistently worked out. However, the stage was set for the entrance of the chief actors.

Thomas Hobbes followed Bacon in agreeing that sensation is the source of all that we know. However, he was a rationalist in his ideal of knowledge, holding with Descartes that mere experience will not give certainty. With this conflict as a background, and with these forerunners, John Locke, the founder of the British school, came upon the scene.

The central idea in Locke is that the mind is a tabula rasa, void of all characters. Knowledge comes by experience alone. Ideas are of two sorts: the simple ideas which come as sensation; and complex ideas which are mind-made combinations of the simple ideas, organized by reflection. The

validity of knowledge is not vouched for by the mere presence of ideas but these must be conformable to the objects of knowledge. Hence our knowledge can reach no further than our ideas. There is an intuitive knowledge which rests upon the permanent identity of ideas and the power of the mind to form and hold them. Thus we have certainty in such matters as logical and mathematical knowledge.[2]

James's first contact with Locke was through his reading the Conduct of the Understanding as early as 1863. In 1878 he obtained a copy of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding which is still extant and annotated and marked by James from cover to cover.[3] In 1883 he gave a course on "English Philosophy" in which a thorough study was made of Locke. James accepted Locke's theory of knowledge especially in regard to abstract and mathematical ideas. He insisted however that the other type of knowledge must be, however imperfect, knowledge of reality rather than merely knowledge of ideas. He felt that Locke had, without realizing it, accepted the principle that existence makes itself known by its action upon the knowing mind.

Locke in his discussion of substances had drawn the distinction between primary qualities which are inseparable from the substance such as solidarity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number, and secondary qualities which have none of the object in themselves. These are: color, sounds, and tastes. George Berkeley followed Locke in his theory that knowledge of the physical world is provided by

sense perception but to refute materialism and atheism he made all of Locke's qualities secondary. To account for the sensational thrust from without Berkeley made use of the hypothesis of God as Locke had made use of material substances. This idealism does not deny, but rather affirms empiricism, for existence depends upon perception.

James's study of Berkeley began in 1875 and culminated in the course in "English Philosophy". In reducing matter to sense perception Berkeley had argued that matter has no meaning for it would make no difference whether it exists or not. James used the same argument in his "pragmatism" by pointing out that sensation is the sole meaning of matter.[4]

David Hume accepted the empirical theory of the origin of knowledge and the Berkeleyan theory that esse est percipi, drawing what seemed to him to be the consequences of these premises. As Berkeley had questioned the existence of material substances so Hume questioned the existence of both material and spiritual substances. Our knowledge must be limited to the phenomenal world for we know nothing of ultimates, substances, causes, soul, ego, external world, or the universe.[5] James agreed with Hume's emphasis on particular items of experience but felt that he had neglected connections which are also given empirically. Hume enthroned juxtaposition as lord of all and as a result attained a nulliverse rather than a universe.[6] James admired the analysis which Hume had made but felt that he should have, on empirical principles, observed the unity of exper-

iences and admitted free will.

John Stuart Mill had carried on the empirical tradition, holding experience to be the final authority in matters of existence. He had reduced existence to possibilities of sensation for beyond the fact of sensation is only the "unknown" and "unknowable". James regarded Mill's philosophy as the culmination of the nihilistic tendency which came from a failure to observe unifying relations. He found Mill's sensationalism defective at two points. In the first place if we limit knowledge of existence to sensation we are only proving that sensations exist. Sensation presents something other than itself--namely an object of sensation. In the second place Mill did not recognize that reasoning from sensation depends upon the mind's capacity to conceive things in one way or another.

James's place in classical empiricism was essentially that of a reformer. He believed that the salvation of philosophy could be by this tradition, but only after it had been purged of its excesses and many mistakes. Atomism, positivism, and naturalism can be avoided, but only by an extension of the principle of empiricism and a complete change of emphasis.

The entire school from Locke to Mill had stressed the passive aspect of the mind. Knowledge was a deposit or a cumulative effect of received impressions from without. James argued that this was a falsification of the character of the mind. The mind is essentially active and selective

and the organization of experience is by action of the mind rather than by action of the sensations themselves. Any other view is dogmatic in its assumptions for it has assumed the existence of an external order which it cannot justify. Locke and Berkeley, because of their religious philosophies, had escaped the scepticism which follows such a dogmatic presupposition of the source of sensation, but the seed of the error was in their thought and the naturalism of Hume and Mill was the logical result.

James believed that the knowing mind, in taking the initiative, was expressing its own bias. This bias was not only the inborn structure of the mind--for there must be some structural relationship between the mind and the object of knowledge--but also consisted of the mind's own subjective interests. The mind is original and spontaneous and probably its receptivity is its least important characteristic.

One of the essential differences between James and his predecessors can be expressed in terms of the temporal reference of ideas and beliefs.[7] The traditional empiricists had referred ideas to the past while James referred them to the future. For Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Mill, the important thing about an idea was that it should have sprung from experience and be justified by its past history. For James the importance and justification of an idea is in its prospects and achievements. In the traditional view the experience has spoken, but according to James the

experience is yet to speak, and its response will be determined partly by the way in which it is interrogated by the active mind.

Knowledge of existence then, according to James, arises within the mind as a result of its own activity rather than from outside itself. The mind must imagine and speculate freely if it is to reach reality. However experience is a check upon and a test of this speculation. Bold thinking is permissable only when it is tentative enough to accept the verdict of experience. The wider and more complete experience gives the mind a broader and sounder truth. The function of the mind is that of asking questions but it is experience that supplies the answers. So it requires varied and intelligent questions, as well as a wide range of experience, to secure illuminating answers.

James held that traditional empiricism had failed not only in its account of the method of knowledge but also in its account of the content. Knowledge of existence must reach beyond the mere fact of existence to the <u>order</u> of existence. If this is to be determined empirically then the order of existence must be experienced. To reduce experience to unrelated items fails to meet the problem nor is it satisfactory to experience relations as more items. Existence and its order must be experienced in their state of relationship.

Berkeley, following the implications of the Lockean philosophy, had insisted on the discontinuity of items of

perception and consequently upon the discontinuity of ideas. Since different minds could thus have no common meeting place God had been introduced to hold the world together. Hume, having discarded God could not escape solipsism and in the matter of the principle of connections he confessed his failure. He had held that perceptions are distinct and that human understanding could not discover connections. Mill following in Hume's footsteps had also failed to meet the same problem.

James disagreed with his predecessors by insisting that perceptions are not distinct in the sense of being sharply sundered, but that connections are as truly perceived as the individual items of experience. He felt that empiricism must grant validity to the relationships because they too are experienced. Perceptions overlap and merge into one another and are qualified by other perceptions. It is not necessary to postulate an ego or hypothetical being for it would only be a name for what experience has already given to us.[8]

The content of knowledge is, James holds, the organization of perceived things and their relations into ideas by the active mind. Ideas come from experience but they are not recorded in the order of their happening on a passive mind. The association of causality and substance is not, as Hume supposed, psychological, but there is a sense in which they belong together and the knowing mind recognizes this fact. The associationalists had placed the

relations between experiences, and the Kantians had made relations a priori. James found the system of relations within experience, holding that experience does not yield qualities and terms to be related, but rather yields them in relation.

For James the validity of knowledge was not so much agreement with the object of perception as its value, pragmatically considered. The origin, whether from God, or man made, does not matter, for the value of the idea can be tested by its fruitage. In this sense, James was a normative rather than a genetic empiricist.

James had been attracted to the British tradition by his scientific training but it was his moral and religious interests which led him to seek its reformation. He saw in empiricism the possibility of the reconciliation of the old conflict between science and religion, and to the resolving of that conflict he directed his energy.[9]

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

1. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 436.
2. Thilly, History of Philosophy, pp 307-329.
3. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 545.
4. Pragmatism, p 89 f.
5. Thilly, History of Philosophy, p 345 ff.
6. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 100.
7. Dr. Dickinson S. Miller in an article in the Philosophical Review, VII (1899), holds this to be the outstanding difference.

   cf. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 558.
8. Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, p 352 ff.
9. A Pluralistic Universe, p 314.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

Early Friendships

William James was one of those rare personalities who could use his friends for his own intellectual advancement, and at the same time contribute even more than he gained. He was more interested in men than in ideas regardless of the depth of their friendship. He agreed with few but loved many, and those with whom he most violently disagreed loved him in spite of differences of viewpoint. It almost seems as if James's regard was, not in spite of, but because of the differences which existed. He used his friends as intellectual foils, conditioning himself, and extracting the best that they had to offer and building it into his own thought. Of his many early friends, three men, Oliver Wendall Holmes Jr., Chauncey Wright, and Charles S. Peirce, played leading roles in the intellectual orientation of James. It will be noted that in each instance they were of rigorous or skeptical turn of mind. It may be that the chief contribution which they made to James was to strengthen the fiber of his own ideas.

The intimacy between Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. and William James began while Holmes was in the Harvard Law School in the year 1864. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., was a member of the faculty of the Harvard Medical School,

and James found in the son the same strength and breadth of mind which characterized the father. In 1866 he wrote of the son that he was a "first-rate article, and one which improves each year. He is perhaps too exclusively intellectual, but sees things so easily and clearly and talks so admirably that it is a treat to be with him".[1] That winter James and Holmes were engaged in a continuing metaphysical discussion which in later years they looked back upon with great delight.

These two men seem to have been drawn together through the problems common to youth, but as they matured their paths diverged. Probably this was due largely to vocational interests but they also had many philosophical differences. Holmes was always a positivist and had no indulgence for metaphysical speculation. He was resolute, self-contained and at times ironical, while James was more impulsive, headstrong, and self-forgetful. Nevertheless Holmes never lost his philosophical interest and read all of James's books, applauding all that was sceptical and relativistic in James but refusing to accept his metaphysics and religion. The friendship continued but the mutual contributions were made in the early years when each man was seeking to find himself.

Chauncy Wright was a close friend of the James family and, in the decade preceding his death in 1875, he visited often in the James home much to the delight and edification of both father and son. Between Wright and William James

there was a pervasive and lasting interchange not only as to ideas but also in the manner of expression. Wright represented the best in the scientific thought of his day and James accepted him as an authoritative exponent of scientific ideals and methods. He was restrained, impersonal, and scrupulous yet possessed of an ability to express himself in forceful and persuasive language. According to his view, science is an inductive discovery of the relations of phenomenal happenings, reduced as far as possible to their elements.[2] James was inclined to accept this point of view, for to him science reveals the physical order of nature and cannot in itself, "be held to reveal any spiritual intent". The phenomenal world is not a divine order but is "mere weather as Chauncey Wright called it, doing and undoing without end".[3]

Wright was an "experiential" philosopher and influenced, or at least confirmed, James in the same attitude. Both men agreed that experience is neither mental nor physical but is rather "neutral", and both emphasised the positive character of thinking in the organization and interpretation of experience. The difference between the two lay in Wright's claim that there is nothing beyond the phenomenal fact. Such a positivistic position with its negative implications had no appeal for James, with his tendency toward religious overbeliefs. James felt that the positivist's denial of of metaphysics could never satisfy religion which demands a positive assurance regarding the moral nature of ultimate things.

In 1875 Wright wrote a review for the New York Nation in which he argued for the scientific method against metaphysical speculation. James wrote a reply which was never published in which he sought to show that positivism was too narrow and arbitrary to be classed as a philosophy.[4] Philosophies are formed to satisfy four desiderata: (1) an explanation of things by their cause; (2) a rule for the will; (3) a warrant for that rule; (4) consistency in thought. Positivism satisfied number one but the others cannot be satisfied without metaphysics. It might be possible to satisfy each one separately without reference to the others but a comprehensive system must cover all points. Manifestly materialism cannot do this.

Since positivism, as interpreted by Wright, reduces the world to an assemblage of particular phenomena having no ulterior connections or unifying principles--ideal, substantial, or dynamic--it appeared to James, to be a sort of philosophical "nihilism". Such a doctrine, says James, is both logically and psychologically untenable. The nihilists who profess to worship facts deny the most obvious of all facts, namely, the continuity of conscious life. James wrote a manuscrupt against nihilism, sometime during the year 1873 and Wright's death, which he handed to the latter who penciled in his comments and returned it to James.[5] These comments indicate that Wright and James were close together in their views regarding experience but far apart in James's insistence upon the necessity for metaphysics.

The influence of Wright was chiefly that of an irritant and a challenge to the much younger James. Wright regarded the young man with parental affection but was never sympathetic with what he regarded as James's excesses of faith. "My good opinion of him relates rather to possibilities in his development, which my intercourse with him has made prominent, than to the merits of anything he has done.... my interest in him is like that of the preacher in the sinner...He rather attracts me by the Jamesian traits; crude and extravagant as are many of his opinions, and more especially his language."[6]

As we have seen, Holmes and James grew apart as they chose different vocational pathways and Wright's companionship was interrupted by his death. Charles S. Peirce, however, developed with James and continued for many years to exert a profound influence. He was three years older than James and had graduated from Harvard in 1859 while James was studying abroad. They met as fellow students as the Lawrence Scientific School where they were drawn together by common interests and tastes. Peirce, like the others, was a constant visitor in the James home. He was attracted to the elder James and in later life loved to quote from his Secret of Swedenborg and his Substance and Shadow.

William James's attitude toward Peirce was one of puzzled admiration. He read his articles and attended his lectures and, although he had difficulty in following them, he enjoyed the "sensation of listening." In 1869, James

described him as being "bold, subtle, and incomprehensible" yet attractive enough to draw forth his strongest praise.[7] It continued to be a thorn in James's side that no large university ever recognized and profited by Peirce's peculiar genius.

The two men were in many respects totally dissimilar. James was well adapted to social intercourse and was a cosmopolitan man of the world. Peirce was always ill at ease in social gatherings, quick tempered, and found it difficult to get along well with his fellow-men. James was slow to take offense, always giving others the benefit of the doubt, but Peirce was prone to be of a suspicious nature. One was modest and appreciative while the other had an ill concealed tendency toward arrogance.

Certain intellectual differences were also pronounced. Peirce was an exponent of exact science and to him inaccuracy was unforgivable, while James, with his artistic and literary background, was inclined to substitute sympathy and delicacy of feeling for pedantic accuracy. The two men probably never fully understood each other but this did not mar their fine friendship. After James's death Peirce testified to his high regard. "I believe him to be, and always to have been during my acquaintance with him, about as perfect a lover of truth as it is possible for a man to be; and I do not believe there is any definite limit to a man's capacity for loving the truth."[8]

James was more influenced by Peirce than Peirce by

James, not only because of the few years difference in their ages, but because of the very nature of the two men. Peirce was self-contained and self-sufficient while James depended upon intercourse for his own development. Their similarity is obvious in the Jamesian vocabulary for such words as "pragmatism" "tychism" and "synechism" are borrowed from Peirce.

The influence of Peirce was probably as strong in doctrinal disagreement as in agreement. He was the only one of James's early close associates who leaned heavily toward the Kantian views. He fed James's dissatisfaction with the sensationalistic outcome of empiricism by insisting that we cannot ignore the connections of things, the a priori elements in judgment, and the transcendence of the objects of knowledge. As a result James's empiricism made provision for these considerations. Both men were interested in the nature of belief and doubt, but for Peirce belief is predestined by fact and social environment while James insists upon an element of emotional preference. Then too, a wide disagreement is seen in their concepts of truth. To Peirce, truth is at the end, the consummation, of the thinking process. In other words, after all thinking has been done and all things brought into agreement, then we have truth. To James, truth is given in the everyday experiences of men.

In the early '70's James and Peirce belonged to what was called "The Metaphysical Club" which included in its

membership such men as Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Joseph Warner, Nicholas St. John Green, Chauncey Wright, and John Fiske. It was here that James first heard Peirce enunciate the principle of pragmatism. Green insisted upon Bain's definition of belief, as "that upon which a man is prepared to act", and Peirce drew his idea, to a large measure, from Kant's "Practical Reason". These, combined with the positivism of Wright, seem to have been the source of James's pragmatism. Peirce refused to be credited with the origin of the doctrine because he insisted that James totally misunderstood him. It was characteristic of James that he should borrow principles and give full credit but by the time they had passed through his own fertile mind they were changed beyond recognition.

James was instrumental in getting Harvard to invite Peirce for a few series of lectures and tried to get him placed upon the Harvard faculty. In this, however, he had no success. Peirce was either unable or unwilling to adapt his ideas to the understanding of immature students, and his personal characteristics counted against him. James next attempted to persuade the Carnegie Corporation to subsidize Peirce during his preparation of a magnum opus on logic, but without success. The relationship between the two men continued to be intimate and affectionate and the dedication of the Will to Believe was to Peirce.

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. Letters, Vol. I, p 76.
2. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 521.
3. Will to Believe, p 52.
4. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 523 f.
5. Ibid, Vol. I, pp 525-28.
6. From the Letters of Chauncey Wright, quoted by Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 530-32.
7. Letters, Vol. I, p 149.
8. From the Collected Papers of C. S. Peirce, quoted by Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 540.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR

European Influences

In attempting to escape from naturalism within the framework of empiricism, James drew intellectual strength from such contemporary German thinkers as Lotze, Mach, Fechner and Hermholtz. These men, like himself, had been trained in the sciences and could use the scientific method without being prejudiced against metaphysics. From them he hoped for an exact statement of the empiricial positions which would be free of the negations of positivism and at the same time justify religion in its broadest sense. Of these men, Lotze and Mach had a large part in the early philosophical adjustment of James.

Hermann Lotze, whom James had described as the "deepest philosopher" of the day,[1] had undertaken the task of reconciling science and religion. The chief doctrinal difference between Lotze and James was in the field of ontology. Lotze was a monist and James singled out his argument, of the impossibility of separate things influencing each other, for special attention and refutation.[2] James felt that all such arguments were based on abstractions and so were not capable of being sustained. However James used this same proof borrowed from Lotze in his early struggle against what he felt to be the "nihilistic" implications of associationism.

In spite of this very fundamental difference between

the two men James felt strongly drawn to the older German philosopher. Lotze's panpsychism was always an alluring attraction to James although he was always thinking up arguments against it. Of greater influence was Lotze 's idea that worth or validity was irreducible to existence or in other words that things actually are what they are worth.[3] This idea finds its repercussions in James's pragmatism. Another strong attraction in Lotze was the fact that he maintained that religious faith, prompted by feeling and conscience, was capable of saying the final word.

It was during his European trip in 1882 that James first met Ernst Mach, with whom he maintained contact by correspondence for many years. Like James, Mach had accepted the British empirical tradition, and like James, he began as a scientist and turned to philsophy. The chief contribution of Mach to James was in the field of psychology although they had some agreement in their development of empiricism. However, Mach was essentially a positivist holding that sensations are data that must be scientifically constructed before they yield knowledge, while for James the "pure experience" delivered knowledge. There is some agreement between the philosophy of Mach and pragmatism, although in his insistance upon the practical motives of knowledge, James had gone far beyond his German friend. Later, Mach worked out a development of pragmatism but the application was to physical and social sciences rather than to philosophy.

It was during this same trip that James came into contact with a great many of the English philosophers. Among these was Henry Sidgwick, who at that time was president of the Society for Psychical Research. This was the beginning of James's lasting interest in the subject. He came to feel that the study of this particular type of phenomena had been neglected and would prove fruitful under sympathetic investigation.[4] There was a close resemblance in the philosophical positions of both men but with apparently no influence one way or the other. Both criticized traditional empiricism for its confusing of the origin and meaning of ideas; both rejected Kantian idealism; and while James was founding the school of pragmatism in America, Sidgwick was giving impetus to the new realism in England. However their emphasis was in different directions, Sidgwick being interested in ethics and James in metaphysics.

It was through his interest in psychical research that James met Edmund Gurney whom he later described as "a man of rarest sympathy and gifts".[5] This was not, however, the only point of contact which James found with Gurney. A strong friendship developed between the two based upon common tastes and interests. At the time of Gurney's untimely death in 1888 it seemed to James to be "one of death's stupidest strokes", for, to James, he was the man who was destined "for an intellectual synthesis of things much solider and completer than any one I know, except perhaps Royce".[6] It was this love for his friend as much as his own interest that led him

to continue the unpopular work of psychical research. Not only did he serve as vice-president and president (1894-95) of the American society, but he actively investigated cases of apparition, thought-transference, and mediumship. For an entire year he and Professor G. H. Palmer attended "cabinet seances" every Saturday. He also investigated and reported the trances of Mrs. Piper and was firmly convinced that she possessed sources of knowledge outside the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits. What this source was James did not venture an opinion upon but from the fact of the knowledge itself he could see no escape.[7]

Eight members of the Metaphysical Society of London called themselves the "Scratch Eight" and made a practice of dining together and talking philosophy. James became temporarily the ninth member and it was in this group that he found rich intellectual companionship. Besides Gurney, the membership included G. Croom Robertson, Shadworth H. Hodgson, James Sully, Carveth Read, Frederick Pollock, Leslie Stephens, and F. W. Maitland. Of these, Maitland, professor of English law at Cambridge and Pollock, writer on philosophical and legal subjects, seem to have made no impression on James. Read, who was called to a professorship of philosophy at Cambridge, was later hailed as a pragmatist but seems to have made no contribution to the thought of James.[8]

There was a warm and intimate friendship between James and Leslie Stephens based upon a mutual respect and admira-

tion although there was no intellectual bond between them. Stephens inclined toward positivism and would never admit James's claims to religious beliefs. He advocated abstention from belief and to James this was the equivalent of disbelief. In the matter of freedom the two men were on opposite sides, but in spite of these differences Stephens valued James's friendship while James, in his characteristic way, rejoiced in the achievements of his philosophical adversary.[9]

The amount of influence exerted by Shadworth Hodgson upon James was so large that his contribution must be discussed separately. James Sully's influence was in the field of psychology. The remaining member of the "Scratch Eight", George Croom Robertson, played an important part in the development of James but it was through a professional rather than a personal influence.

Robertson was professor of mental philosophy and logic at University College, London, and the first editor of Mind, the first issue of which appeared in January 1876. James immediately became a subscriber and soon was contributing articles. It was through this channel that James first became known in Europe and the periodical gave him access to the thought of the British philosophers. James and Robertson were about the same age and were in close philosophical agreement, both being of the British empirical tradition. In spite of his editorial neutrality, Robertson sympathized with James's attack upon the Hegelians. Robert-

son, who had never been in the best of health, died in 1892.

James made no attempt to see Herbert Spencer probably because, by the time of his extended visit of 1882-83, the English philosopher had lost his attraction for James. There were three others whose acquaintance he might have sought had they still been living as their alliance with the British tradition was similar to his own. J. F. Ferrier, who had died in 1864, was valued for his style;[10] John Grote (1813-1866), he regarded as one who was "too seldom quoted";[11] and G. H. Lewes, who died in 1878, had been discussed by James in two appreciative book reviews. Of these, Lewes was the closest to James in the matter of doctrine. He was commended for developing empiricism without falling into nihilism or scepticism and his method of avoiding these alternatives was similar to James's. However, Lewes made use of the device of explaining differences--subject and predicate, psychical and physical--as being different aspects of the same things. James did not feel that he logically defended his position and became nettled by his diffuseness and iteration.[12]

Alexander Bain who lived until 1903 was twenty-four years older than James and was regarded by him as an authority in the field of psychology but an exponent of associationism. James held him to be one of the two leading philosophers of England, in point of influence, but classed him with the sceptics and nihilists.[13] However it was partly

to Bain that James owed his idea of the active character of belief and in the matter of psychological doctrine they had much in common.

W. K. Clifford had died in 1879 and Huxley was still active. James later pointed to these men as being splendid examples of the unconscious passion of science which expresses a faith without always being aware that it has a faith.[14] James visited Mrs. Clifford in 1883 to express his regrets that he had never had the pleasure of meeting and knowing her husband.

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 586.
2. A Pluralistic Universe, p 55 ff.
3. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 587.
4. The Will to Believe, pp 299-327.
5. Ibid, p 307.
6. Letters, Vol. I, p 279-80.
7. The Will to Believe, p 319.
8. The Meaning of Truth, p 40.
9. Letters, Vol. II, p 152.
10. Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 591.
11. Ibid, p 592.
12. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 40.
13. Ibid, p 26.
14. The Will to Believe, p 7-8.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

Hodgson and Renouvier

While Gurney was the best loved of the famous "Scratch Eight" it was Shadworth Hodgson whom James drew most heavily upon. The two men did not meet until 1880, but James had been reading the English philosopher for a decade. Hodgson was a private scholar some ten years older than James. He was admired by his contemporaries but has been neglected by the posterity which has to know him only through his writings. While Bain and Spencer achieved wide recognition, Hodgson was known only to a few although his published works were many. James ascribed this to the fact that while the lesser men were abounding in concrete illustrations the greater Hodgson was deeper and more obscure, for to him "the concatenation of the thoughts is everything."[1]

James was attracted to the older man because he was, like James, attempting to salvage the British tradition, for he felt that there was the possibility of a more comprehensive philosophy being developed upon the line of Locke than upon that of Leibnitz. He rejected traditional empiricism because it assumed the existence of a material world, and because of the sensationalistic atomism of Hume. In fact, his antipathy for these was so strong that he refused to use the term "empiricism" and substituted "experientialism". While James continued to use the word "empiricism" in his own

philosophy, Hodgson used it as a term of disparagement to apply to the positivistic and naturalistic tendencies within the school. Apart from terminology, however, the two men were in close agreement in their interpretation and development of empiricism.

Hodgson was an experimentalist in his doctrine of existential knowledge, insisting that experience is the process in which our knowledge of being or of existence originates. This view is similar to James's although James later reached a more radical position. It was in his experiential theory of being that James drew from Hodgson. Realities are what they are "known as",[2] meaning as they are immediately known in perception. In 1910 James coupled Hodgson and Peirce as being sources of his pragmatism.[3]

In spite of these and other relationships the two men had many philosophical differences. As early as 1880 James began to have doubts about Hodgson and sometimes wondered "whether the <u>ignotum</u> does not pass itself for the <u>mirifico</u> in his pages", and in 1883 he confessed to his wife that he had "touched Hodgson's finiteness for me".[4] The bulk of the correspondence between the two philosophers is concerned with their disagreements which for James proved to be a stimulus that forced him to think out and defend his own positions.

Their earliest correspondence concerned itself with "the automaton theory"--"the question of whether consciousness is, or is not, an effective agent in its own right".[5]

James started as an automatist but later had been converted to the opposite view, while Hodgson first opposed automatism and later accepted it. In an early unpublished manuscript, James calls attention to the fact that Hodgson had first claimed that it was impossible to suppose that consciousness was merely a "foam, aura, or melody arising from the brain but without reaction upon it." In his later work he had recanted this doctrine and was claiming that consciousness depends upon states or movements of nerves, and that the states of consciousness "do not in their turn react upon the states or movements of nerves". From here James proceeded to defend against its critics, including the early Hodgson, the idea that the chain of psychological causation is in itself complete, without the intervention of feeling or will.[6]

By 1875 James had shifted to the opposite extreme in an effort to escape the materialistic implications of automatism while Hodgson felt that he could hold the theory and still transcend materialism. Then too, James felt that Hodgson had accepted monism and that this could not assuage the demands of the sense of moral reality. Hodgson argued that his position involved infinity but not monism and that it gave a sense of moral security which anit-automatism could not possibly give. He felt that James was trying to make the creator a puppet of the conceiving faculty and that reality could not be reached in that way.

Hodgson believed that it was necessary to get rid of mind as agent because of its inherent contradictions which

lead to scepticism. He claimed that the view of mind as agent was an assumption which was not justified by experience and he proposed to base his philosophy entirely upon experience. Mind viewed as dependant upon the physical organism subordinates mind to matter, but matter depends on some real condition in the Unseen World. Consciousness then is the mirror of the Unseen World. We must never, therefore, assign mind as a cause until we know what mind is. James suspected that Hodgson's subordination of mind to matter was a methodological device and an evasion of the real issue.

The two men carried on a spirited correspondence about the subject of free will which covered a period of several years.[7] James felt that the only alternative to freedom was determination which led inevitably to pre-determinism. He argued for a world of chance as being less irrational than a determined world because it is a moral world.[8] Hodgson held that it was not necessary to adopt the principle of indeterminism in order to escape the idea of a fixed and pre-determined order. Freedom meant for him, chaos, chance and inconsistency, and as antithetical to freedom he placed law. Law is the uniform pre-determining power but is not an agent, but rather is the result or the expression of the behavior of the agents--nature and men. We have a freedom of choice but beyond that we are determined for law brings inexorably the pre-determined results of our choice. The real question then is whether a man's choices are determined from within him or compelled from without. Hodgson felt that

by setting freedom and determinism over against each other James had made the mistake of opposing liberty to law rather than to constraint, for without law neither existence nor free will would be possible.

James felt that Hodgson was, by his insistence upon a world of uniform law in which variations were chaos, defending an absolutistic conception which he could not accept. The moral or the religious nature recognizes the existence of both good and evil and these cannot be merged into a higher synthesis because one always stands in denial of the other. If we were to exclude moral catagories then such a synthesis would be possible but on moral grounds we are driven to accept freedom.

After 1890 the correspondence between James and Hodgson slackened. James had by this time assimilated all that Hodgson had to offer and his days of desultory sampling in the field of philsosphy were over. They continued to read each others books and articles and exchanged views at long intervals, but James by this time had worked out his own positions and was no longer despendent upon other philosophers. From this time on most of their letters were friendly exchanges of greetings and good will.

The other philosopher who played a vital role in the shaping of the thought of William James was Charles Renouvier. His influence came first and lasted longer than that of Hodgson. Renouvier, like the English philosopher, was a reformer of empiricism and it was James's hope that these

two men might come to know and appreciate each other. To this end he acted as interpreter and even arranged for a meeting but they never came to an understanding or admitted a philosophical bond.

In 1868, James first started reading Renouvier, who became the greatest individual influence upon the development of his mature thought. In the same year James contributed an article to the Critique philosophique of which Renouvier was editor and in the following year he offered a course on the thought of the French philosopher using his untranslated works as a text. James felt that he owed his own mental health to Renouvier's vindication of the freedom of the will.[9] This was but the beginning of his debt and he continued to draw strength and sustenance from the older philosopher which he gratefully acknowledged in his last work.[10]

To James, Renouvier was an example of what empiricism should be. Renouvier owed his philosophy to Kant and Hume and it was his development of the latter's philosophy which attracted James's attention. Renouvier felt, that had Hume been consistent with his empiricism and his individualism, he would have become a libertarian instead of a determinist. Mill had made the same mistake and so had missed the true implications of his position.

From Renouvier, James acquired, or at least found justification for, his identification of the real with the apparent, and knowledge with the delivery of experience. For Renouvier, there were no hidden substances apart from the

"representations" presented by experience. Representations have a dual aspect--subjective and objective--which are unified by cognition. Cognition is a catagory but as such it is not to be deduced but must be empirically observed. By recognizing and emphasizing such obvious connections Renouvier escaped the "nihilistic juxtapositionalism" of Hume and Mill, and his great difference from the traditional empiricism lay in the fact that he stressed the laws of grouping as much as the phenomena grouped.[11]

The fideism advanced by Renouvier in his Deuxieme Essai was the one of the sources of James's believing will. He argued that the empiricist must recognize the discrepancy between the dubiousness of knowledge delivered by particular facts and the demand for the assurance of faith. Belief must be sure and since neither experience nor reason is capable of giving any assured certainty, then it requires an act of will to bring about the desired consummation of belief. This is a premature and hazardous self-commitment which finds its only justification on moral grounds. This brings us face to face with the subjective basis of belief but we are not to assume that belief is subjectively extemporized or created out of nothing. On the contrary, belief is completed or adopted by a subjective act impelled by subjective motives. If we admit the legitimacy of the motive then we must grant the legitimacy of the act. Where experience and logic leave a gap and where there is a practical need belief may be dictated by religious and moral considerations.

This is the function of the will, for the will applies itself, in the form of attention, to ideas and when an idea survives, to the exclusion of others, it expresses itself in action. But is the will free? Yes, replied Renouvier, because I can sustain a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts. In other words, freedom consists in directing the attention.[12]

James's strongest argument for freedom was on moral grounds but from Renouvier he received another. This was the argument that thinking must be free to be either true or false. It can mean nothing to discuss the question of freedom, or any other question, unless one is free to affirm or deny its truth or falsity. This is a development of the famous cogito ergo sum of the Cartesian tradition where freedom is the only escape from doubt.

Freedom involves, according to both Renouvier and James, a pluralistic universe where there are various possibilities of realization and development. Both agreed that monism is fatal to freedom for in an all-enveloping whole there is no possibility of novelty. Renouvier was a finitist holding that the existant world was limited in space, time, and causality. He believed infinity to be self-contradictory because if it is real it must be determinate and numerable. James never fully accepted this position although through Renouvier he learned to believe first beginnings were at least intelligible hypotheses.[13]

James, in his Pluralism insists upon the unity of the

world found in the interrelationship of the various entities. This idea came from Renouvier's argument that the world may compose a whole without being determined by it. Neither man was interested in a pluralism of disconnected and unrelated parts, but both insisted that the unity should not predetermine the various parts. For James the very essence of empiricism lay in the priority of the part to the whole.

James and Renouvier had certain doctrinal differences which serve to emphasize their different temperaments. Renouvier's pluralism took the form of a monadism in which the world was conceived as a multitude of "personalities" in various stages of development. James felt that this was a denial of Renouvier's rejection of idealism and the doctrine of substance. For James there was no essential relationship except through the various connections. There was also a difference in philosophic manner and style. Renouvier was rigorous and systematic while James was bold, unorganized and more vivid. James disliked what he thought was the speculative extravagances in Renouvier, while Renouvier found James too romantic and prone to overrun boundaries.

Renouvier was twenty-seven years older than James but between the two men there was a profound personal sympathy which lasted for twenty-five years until halted by the death of the older man. At the time of the first contact between the two, James was just beginning his career and Renouvier was well established. As James matured he grew away from Renouvier philosophically but continued to regard him

with veneration. The pupil had gone beyond the master but continued to regard him as "a great figure in philosophic history".[14]

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

1. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 27.
2. Pragmatism, p 50.
3. Letters, Vol. II, p 328.
4. From previously unpublished letters, Perry, R. B., Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 614.
5. Ibid, p 615.
6. Ibid, p 615.
7. Ibid, Chapter XXXIX.
8. The Will to Believe, pp 145-183.
9. Letters, Vol. I, p 169.
10. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 165, note.
11. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 29.
12. This is the idea that helped James through the "crisis" of 1870. Letters, Vol. I, p 147.
13. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 163 ff.
14. Letters, Vol. II, p 214.

PART TWO

CHAPTER SIX

The Struggle with Idealism and Rationalism

Idealism and epistemological rationalism had long been the refuge of religious philosophies but James came to regard them as the arch-enemies of religion and repudiated them on that ground. At first he was sympathetic, probably as a result of his father's philosophy, but he finally took his stand against them.

It was Berkeley's idealism which had the strongest appeal for James. Based on empiricism, it offered an escape from the naturalism of Spencer. Holding the view that only that is existent which is or can be given in sense perception, Berkeley had concluded that only perceptions exist, together with the giving and receiving minds. The alternative view of the realist contended that the physical reality is given in perception and that this object of perception is prior to its impingement upon the mind. Between these two views James felt that he must make a choice.

In 1870, James filled thirty pages of a note book on the subject of idealism and realism. The arguments were carefully written out both pro and con and the conclusion was in favor of a subjective idealism.[1] In 1883-85, in his course on English philosophy, he again considered the topic and again inclined toward idealism. Here he was influenced by Lotze and by Royce to consider reality as mental rather

than physical. Such a hypothesis enabled him to escape materialism and still retain a reality outside the knower but such a view postulates an all-knowing mind which is hard to reconcile with the existence of separate finite minds. How, he asks, if we are separate from the all-knowing mind, can representations be sent to us, and if our minds are only bits of the over-mind, how can we have separate consciousness?

The publication of the Principles of Psychology, in 1890, found James still undecided in the matter of idealism. For purpose of study and analysis he assumed a dualism of subject and object with a preestablished harmony. We must accept as axiomatic the interrelation of the physical and mental world otherwise there can be no science of psychology. However the psychologist if he is also a metaphysician has a right to have another philosophy in reserve.[2]

It was only after many years that James came to align himself with the realists and definitely repudiate idealism.[3] He felt that the chief objection to idealism lay in its inability to escape solipsism by proving the existence of other minds. We can only infer the existence of others and this is an inference beyond our experience. If we can affirm other minds beyond our experience then on the same grounds we are justified in affirming an objective cause of sensation. Thus the Berkeleyan idealist can escape solipsism only by assumptions which are contrary to his idealism.

Although the empirical idealism of Berkeley and Hume

appealed to James and won his favor for a time, the same thing was never true of the Kantian type of idealism. He did not dismiss it lightly, but on the contrary it was his favorite enemy and philosophical antagonist. This school held that the order of nature can be known only as order is thought into it by the knowing mind. This makes necessary an all-knowing mind as a unifying principle. This a priori method was contrary to all that James believed for he found unification given in experience if properly discerned.

In 1868 James began a slow and laborious study of Kant's Kritik which he found hard reading but the "honestest piece of work" which he had yet encountered.[4] He was convinced that whether right or wrong Kant's monumental work was a landmark to which all future philosophical speculation would have to be referred. James continued to read Kant and gave a seminar in 1896-97 on his philosophy. He admired the German master but his early disagreement never changed. His insistence upon the active nature of the mind and his view on art, morals, and religion were probably influenced more by Kant than he would have been willing to acknowledge.

James felt that the essence of Kant was the dependence of knowledge upon a priori catagories which are constitutive principles of the mind. These impose themselves upon whatever material is given from without. Otherwise, according to Kant, there could be no science for knowledge of nature could not be necessary. James was unwilling to assume that knowledge of nature was necessary for although

the mind is active, its intervention is tentative. Kant had sought to prove the structural relationship between mind and experience by their agreement. However for James, it was the disagreement between mind and experience which proved mind to have a structure of its own.

In 1897 James prepared some notes for an article on Kant which was never written, in which he tried to make clear the difference between his "pure" empiricism and Kant's view. "There is", he wrote, "a mental structure, but the congruence of nature with it is a painfully attained compromise in which much mental structure has to be thrown away. The most essential features of our mental structure, viz., grammar and logic, violate the order of nature as on reflection we believe it to exist....If Kant's significance is limited to the vindication of some active part played by the higher mind in the construction of experience, then of course he has refuted Hume."[5] There is however very little merit in Kant if we accept his idea of the mind being entirely dominating in experience. Moreover, James believed that Kant had repeated Hume's mistake in regard to the connections between substances and causes. For Hume they are habits while for Kant they are rules but there is no reason to suppose that one is more necessary than the other.

Kant as the founder of the school was always an opponent to be refuted, but Hegel was James's particular enemy. G. H. Palmer, one of James's colleagues, was attempting to revive a modified version of Hegel's thought.

Against Hegel and his supporters James hurled the full force of his polemic wit. He contrasted their "sacerdotal airs" and their "sterility" and called them the "white-winged band".[6] He confided to Renouvier that he thought that the revival of Hegel was intended to bolster the liberal movement in Christianity but although it might succeed in giving a quasi-metaphysical backbone to theology it was "too fundamentally rotten and charlatanish to last long."[7]

James's dislike of Hegel began in 1867 when he read the Aesthetik and commented on the "monstrous sentences".[8] In the article, "On Some Hegelisms" written in 1882 James attacked the Hegelians in a derisive fashion. He later added a note comparing the Hegelian insight to nitrous-oxide intoxication and spoke of the famous dialectic as being like the "immense emotional sense of reconciliation which characterizes the 'maudlin' stage of alcoholic drunkenness".[9] By the time of writing his Varieties James was willing to grant to Hegel a modicum of insight but still considered him artificial and sophisticated with his monistic insight resembling anaesthetic revelation.[10]

Since the idealism of Hegel is based on rationalism and monism, to James, it seemed antithetical to moral and religious interests. The doctrines of Hegel, James felt, paralyze the moral will because they see the world as good rather than something to be made good. Then, in the closed system there can be no room for freedom, which is necessary

for religion. Here again, as in most of the Jamesian philosophy, religion and morals furnish the criterion by which doctrines are tested.

Schopenhauer was another of the Kantian idealists who drew James's fire but it was Schopenhauer's pessimism rather than his metaphysics which was the object of attack. He thought that Schopenhauer was among the first to realize "the concrete truth about the ills of life",[11] but the beauties and goodnesses of life were neglected. Pessimism is as impossible of proof as optimism and as long as either is a matter of dogmatism, James felt that it was wiser to select the view which was not a denial of hopes.

Pessimism was regarded by James as being a type of fatalism even worse than that which is a resignation to the inevitable, for it is an abondonment of the better possibilities, from inaction. Such a negative philosophy makes ridiculous the moral will, for the will to believe becomes wishful and illusory thinking. James was unmerciful in his treatment of any absolute pessimist but as for Schopenhauer, his gibes were vitriolic. His "loud mouthed pessimism was that of a dog who would rather see the world ten times worse than it is, than lose his chance of barking at it, and whom nothing would have unsuited so completely as the removal of cause for complaint. There are pathetic pessimists and cantankerous pessimists. Schopenhauer was not pathetic."[12]

The idealistic and rationalistic friends of James's

were always attempting to convert him to their points of view. Each attempt seemed to find him more firmly established on his own ground and he resisted their advances with goodnatured gibes and forceful arguments. However, they definitely played a part in his development both by their interest and by forcing him to defend his own position. Of these men, Thomas Davidson, George Howison, and Josiah Royce are most worthy of mention.

Davidson, a private scholar, was a devotee of the Rosminians, an order devoted to contemplation and service. He was a student of Plato and Aristotle and believed that in the Rosminian order he had found a philosophy which was a modern interpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines. He was a brilliant exponent of a new scholasticism which was equally opposed to both Kantianism and the British empirical school. Its contral idea was the doctrine of the intuitive contemplation of being.

Davidson rejected Catholicism and had no patience with traditional theism. He held that God and humanity are synonomous terms, for all movements for righteousness are human movements. "God is love" but we must not read too much into the word "love", for when we have done away with the idea of God and taken the responsibility of the world upon our own shoulders then we shall make progress.[13]

The bulk of the correspondence between James and Davidson concerned itself with the matter of theism. James sympathized with Davidson's idea for he felt that the idea

of God as a starting point in philosophy had been badly misused. However, James was finding that as an "ideal to attain and made probable" he was less and less able to dispense with God.[14] He refused to look at the world except as it contained an objective purpose or to think of purpose apart from a mind. James was frank in admitting that his view could be as near polytheism as monotheism for purpose might be several as easily as it can be one.

The only bond of sympathy between the two men was in their moral individualism but the metaphysical implications of the Jamesian view seemed to Davidson to lead to chaos in which no moral life is possible. They continued to correspond until the death of Davidson in 1900, but the disagreements, although pleasant, were many.

Although Howison was eight years older than James the two men were philosophical contemporaries. Howison had been called to the University of California in 1884, a year before James obtained his first professorship at Harvard. Although separated by three thousand miles a warm friendship existed between the two until the year of James's death.

Howison was a rationalist and a descendant of the Kantian line and so was a philosophic enemy. However, the two men had much in common in the matter of doctrine although they arrived at their conclusions by different approaches. Howison's "personal idealism" was pluralistic but he disagreed with the radical pluralism advocated by

James. His doctrine was nearer to an individualism with a rationalist metaphysic than to the pluralistic reality which dominates James's philosophy. James could not bring himself to agree with Howison but felt that they had much in common.[15]

Howison, like James, was an indeterminist, and in his development of the idea had attempted to work out a harmony between determinism and free will. It was not an effort to harmonize predestination and capricious freedom but to fit together, into a unity, the facts of determinism and freedom, and show that they are both necessary in a moral world. James felt that Howison was guilty of ambiguity in his attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable.

In spite of these differences between the two men which were aggravated by Howison's leaning toward Hegelianism, James felt that they were close together in many respects and regarded Howison as fighting by his side against monism and determinism.

Josiah Royce was thirteen years younger than James but was regarded as the most formidable exponent of monism and rationalism. Between the two men there existed a friendship based upon a mutual admiration which was never disturbed by their bitter philosophical battles. Royce began his teaching career at the University of California and later, because of James's influence, was called to Harvard.

In 1885 Royce's Religious Aspects of Philosophy was published which contained a new proof of idealism which was to bother James for many years. Royce argued that an

idea can be true or false only in relation to its object. But what makes an object the object of an idea? Royce replied that it was only the intention of the mind which possesses both the idea and the object and determines that the one shall be the idea of the other. But since the object lies outside and beyond the reach of the mind we must have an enveloping mind or universal consciousness which possesses both the idea and its object and can make one the idea and the other the object.[16]

For many years James could not find an answer to this argument although he felt that such a pantheistic monism was objectionable on ethical grounds. In 1887 he was suspecting that the argument was inconclusive,[17] but it was not until about 1893 that he found the answer he sought. He argued that an idea could be linked with its object within the finite mind so that Royce's Absolute Thought or Universal Consciousness was not necessary to the union of idea and object. He charged that Royce supposed facts outside of human experience and then postulated his Absolute to account for them. Royce replied that human experience presupposes facts which are outside itself, and James rejoined that these facts are embraced within human experience.

The struggle continued for many years and was influential both ways in that it made both men work out their own positions with an exactness which otherwise would not have been possible. James continued to admire Royce and

his work although his respect for his doctrines diminished. Such a "noetic monism" seemed to fail in its explanation of evil and to deny human freedom. James linked Royce with Spinoza, Fichte, and Hegel as exponents of an untenable absolute idealism.[18]

PART TWO

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

1. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 575 ff.
2. Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, p 220.
3. Essays in Radical Empiricism, p 76 ff.
4. Letters, Vol. I, p 138.
5. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 718.
6. Letters, Vol. I, p 205.
7. Ibid, p 218.
8. Ibid, p 87.
9. The Will to Believe, pp 294-298.
10. Ibid, p 389, note.
11. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 26.
12. From a letter to Karl Hillebrand, Aug. 10, 1883, in reply to a request to serve on a committee to erect a monument to Schopenhauer. Perry, Thought and Character Vol. I, p 724.
13. From a letter from Davidson to James, Dec. 14, 1881. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 735.
14. Ibid, p 737.
15. Letters, Vol. II, p 22.
16. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 798.
17. Letters, Vol. I, p 265.
18. Some Problems of Philosophy, pp 137 f.

PART THREE

THOUGHT

Chapter

1 . . . . . Empiricism

2 . . . . . Pragmatism

3 . . . . . Pluralism

4 . . . . . Belief and the Will

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PART THREE

CHAPTER ONE

Empiricism

William James has often been accused of inconsistency and from one point of view the accusation has its justification. He was inventive and positive in his search for new ideas and quick to affirm his latest find without attempting to fit it to his previous discoveries. Ralph Barton Perry says of him that he was "more concerned with the new wine than with the old bottles".[1] Because of this surface inconsistency his philosophy never became systematized. He was the pioneer who opened new lands and then moved to other frontiers leaving the less hardy to settle, survey and map the country. A deeper understanding of James will reveal a self-consistency or at least a decidedly consistent inconsistency. The facts of his life seem to disprove this statement for he started as a physiologist and ended as a religious mystic having passed through psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics on his way. The partisans of science see in this a decline from youthful vigor to the senility of age while the exponents of religion hail it as an orderly growth of insight and depth. The truth of the matter is that James was early interested in both science and religion and throughout his life he was both scientific and religious. His deepest interest was always philosophy and although there were many changes of emphases and many approaches, he remained true to his first and strongest love.

Because of the religious environment of his boyhood and the scientific training of his youth, James looked to philosophy to reconcile the two, giving to religion a more critical mind and to science a sustaining motivation. His individualism forbade an acceptance of dogmas or a union with the church while at the same time he felt the incompleteness and the lack of warmth in Science. Orthodoxy, whether scientific or religious, was repudiated and vigorously contested. He accepted the discoveries of science but rejected its negations, such as dogmatism, positivism, atheism, and determinism, as being an abuse of authority. The counter-claims of religion were met in the same spirit, its affirmations being accepted and its negations denied.

Historically, epistemological empiricism has been associated with materialism and has been used to attack religious faith but James reversed this process to bring empiricism to the defense of religion. The appeal of both science and religion must be found in an appeal to experience and in as far as they are both based on experienced truths they are true and consistent. The exponents of religion were trying to save their faith by taking refuge in rationalism but James felt that the salvation lay in the opposite direction. This thesis is strongly stated in his Hibbert Lectures delivered at Manchester College when he says, "Let empiricism once become associated with religion, as hitherto, through some strange misunderstanding, it has been associated with irreligion, and I believe that a new

era of religion as well as of philosophy will be ready to begin".[2] He blamed the prevailing tendencies to rely on dialectics and "higher consciousnesses" for the superstitions and wild-growing over-beliefs which infest religious thinking and demanded more trust in the realities of experience.

To clarify the thinking of William James in this field it is necessary that we have a definition of empiricism as he used the term. We have previously examined the word's connotation in its historic sense and this explanation is acceptable but we must add to that the broader meanings. As we have seen empiricism in its genetic sense is the a posteriori theory of knowledge in which experience is the prime mover and criterion of judgment. It is thus implied that the mind which knows is on the same plane of existence and co-existent in time and space with the object known. Sense perception has been the intermediary between the subject and the object. The senses are assumed to be ports of entry which receive cargoes from outside; or antennae by which the contour and action of the experiences are met by the exploratory organism.[3] In a still larger sense we may say that empiricism is fundamentally a doctrine which believes that the truth of knowledge depends upon the verifiable contingent existence of that which is believed to be known. One may think clearly and logically but such thought is not a true criterion of truth until experienced "facts" are found. R. B. Perry presents a vivid illustra-

tion in his definition of empiricism, "I judge," he says, "that crows are black. According to the empirical theory it suffices, in order that this judgment shall be correct, that a black crow present itself. Whether the blackness of crows is logically necessary, or is consonant with moral and aesthetic predispositions, is of secondary consequence: according to empiricism, the appearance of one or more black crows cuts short the argument and settles the matter."[4]

A further meaning of the word which follows naturally from the above lies in the relationship of the whole to its parts. While rationalism must explain the parts by wholes, empiricism, on the other hand, explains the whole by the parts. James insisted that here lay the most vital and pregnant difference between the two schools of thought.[5] His development of this difference will be apparent in the discussion of his pluralism.

While in its broadest sense empiricism may be defined as the a posteriori theory of existential knowledge, James qualified this theory by insisting that the knowing mind initiates the ideas to which the a posteriori test is applied. Thus it becomes, for James, an experimental theory of existential knowledge. Two further tenets are also embraced which may be referred to as the voluntaristic or fideistic theory of belief and the experiential or intuitive theory of reality.

As we have seen the leaders of the school of British

empiricism had been inclined to regard the mind as being passive in its receptivity of external stimuli. James held that the mind is active in the process of cognition as well as being interested and inventive. The mind initiates ideas of existence which are submitted to existence to be accepted or rejected. In this initiation of ideas the mind shows a decided hereditary bias which determines the types of hypotheses which shall be tested. While the mind's cognitive judgments reflect this bias the most important experiences are those which come to the mind and which determine the truth or falsity of the idea. Every cognitive project is on trial until proven and then is only tentative and subject to elaboration and correction. Empiricism must always be content to regard its most positive convictions as hypotheses which are liable to modification during the course of subsequent experience.[6]

Cognition is defined by James as being a "function of consciousness".[7] It is the meeting place of the subject and the object and as such it follows that both subject and object must be present although the experience itself must not be confused with either. One view would lead to subjective idealism and the other to objective realism--both views must be avoided.

James's voluntarism will be discussed in a later chapter but it is necessary to call attention to the fact that it is an integral and consistent part of his empiricism. It has been noted that according to his experimental theory

of existential knowledge the knowing mind does not play a passive role but enters actively into cognition. This activity of the mind is the result of an act of will. The true answer is given by sense perception but the fruitfulness of the answer depends upon the skillful framing of the question. The mind tries what it hopes is true for if it had no desire there would be no attempt and hence no reaction.

There are times when the will may be the sole arbiter of knowledge and ideas may be supported by either empirical or moral evidence if there is no contradition between the two. It is impossible to limit the searching mind to perceptual proof so it is necessary to admit this broad use of speculation. In the field of religion the empirical test is not always possible so certain over-beliefs or extra-empirical beliefs are indicated. Rationalism provides for this lack by its a priori proofs and evidence from necessity, but empiricism having renounced such devices must admit that no theoretical proofs exist. In this regard the test of ideas must be a moral test which is both important and valid. This concession or complement of empiricism must not be made to carry too much weight for wherever possible fact-finding takes precedence over faith, leaving to faith the tesk of venturing beyond the confines of perceived fact.

Experimentalism and voluntarism take account of conceptual knowledge such as the beliefs of everyday life and

the conclusions of science and philosophy. "Most of the things we know", says James, "the tigers now in India for example, or the scholastic system of philosophy, are known only representatively or symbolically."[8] There is still another way in which things can be known and that is to know them immediately or intuitively. We come here to the third part of his empiricism, namely the "experiential" theory of reality.

Experience to James is "a process in time, whereby innumerable particular terms lapse and are superseded by others that follow upon them by transitions which, whether disjunctive or conjunctive in content, are themselves experiences, and must in general be accounted at least as real as the terms which they relate."[9] "Pure" experience is experience independent of all thought, to which the life of the infant or semi-comatose person approximates. In other words it is pristine perception before conceptualization.

It is not true that whatever is rational is real as claimed by the rationalists but whatever is experienced is real.[10] If we would reach reality we must take experience in its purity as it exists before it has been shaped by conceptual thinking. We must go behind the conceptual function entirely and look at the more primitive flux of the sensational life in order to see reality's true form. Philosophy becomes a search for this reality and is more a matter of vision than of logic since logic is of use

only to find reasons for the visions afterwards.

Out of "pure" experience grows consciousness which is experience permeated with thought. This too is reality for the world is not ready-made and complete from eternity but is waiting to be moulded by our minds. What is true of the world is largely a matter of our own creation. Back of the phenomenal fact there is nothing at all, no thing-in-itself, no Absolute, or no Unknowable. It is idle to attempt to explain percieved reality by an assumed reality of which we can form no idea except through symbols drawn from our own experience. This sounds almost like subjective idealism but James never doubted the existence of an extra-mental world. The content of "pure" experience is not subjective but is objective being composed of the primordial stuff which grows conscious.

The continuity of experience is a "next-to-next" relationship.[11] In this sense the world is a unity but there is no <u>essential</u> unity because the whole is a resultant of its component parts. It is a fluid and flexible world of which we form ideas of unity after the analogy of its parts.[12] The relations by which the totality hangs together are <u>de facto</u> rather than necessary or essential relations. Between experiences there must be a cognitive transition. Our fields of experience have no more definite boundaries than have our fields of view but both are fringed by a "more" which continuously develops as life proceeds.[13]

This fluid, interpenetrating field of given existence as pictured in the thought of William James was far re-

moved from the sensationalistic atomism of historic empiricism, for it included religious mysticism and the intuitionalism of Henri Bergson, but it was not intended to be an abandonment of the older tradition. Instead it was to be taken as a modification and correction of previous thought. To the very last he regarded "perceptual experience" as that which gives the most vital and profound features of reality. "Here alone", he says, "do we acquaint ourselves with continuity, or the immersion of one thing in another, here alone with self, with substance, with quality, with activity in its various modes, with time, with cause, with change, with novelty, with tendency, and with freedom."[14]

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

1. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 449.
2. A Pluralistic Universe, p 314.
3. Discussed in Principles of Psychology, Vol. II, p 7 ff.
4. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I, p 452.
5. A Pluralistic Universe, pp 7, 8.
6. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 43 ff.
7. The Meaning of Truth, p 1 ff.
8. Ibid, p 43.
9. Ibid, p 111.
10. Essays in Radical Empiricism, p 39 ff.
11. A Pluralistic Universe, p 277 ff.
12. Ibid, p 10 ff.
13. Meaning of Truth, p 116 ff.
14. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 97.

PART THREE

CHAPTER TWO

Pragmatism

Although William James disclaimed the credit for originating the word "Pragmatism", he popularized the term and it rightly belongs to him. To the title of his book Pragmatism, James appended the subtitle: "A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking" indicating that he was making no claim to having invented the content of Pragmatism, but was merely restating it. He also meant that he himself had espoused these "ways of thinking" from the beginning of his career and that they represented a contemporary tendency which he shared with others. There are two cardinal principles of Pragmatism as interpreted by James. The first is a method and the second is a theory of truth.[1]

The pragmatic method is a method of settling metaphysical disputes which might otherwise prove to be interminable.[2] In such a dispute the procedure is to determine the value of an idea, theory or belief by tracing its practical consequences. We begin by asking ourselves what difference it would make if one notion or another is true and if there is no practical difference in the results then the alternatives mean the same thing and all dispute is idle.

Philosophy has since the beginning sought to find answers to the ultimate problems of existence but absolute answers are not to be discovered. Pragmatism is less a

solution to these problems, than a basis for further research and discovery, holding not a pretense of finality in the matter of truth but concerning itself with possibilities. Theories are not answers to enigmas in which we may rest but are instruments by which existing realities may be changed.

Pragmatism is in agreement with many ancient philosophic tendencies: agreeing with nominalism in its appeal to specificity; with utilitarianism in its emphasis upon practical results; and with positivism in its distrust of verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions.[3] However, there can be no truce between this method and the method of rationalism with its dogmas and doctrines of finalities. Intellectualism is likewise diametrically opposed to the tentative results of pragmatism. James illustrates his method by borrowing an analogy from Papini and calls his method a "corridor theory".[4] It lies in the midst of our theories like a corridor in a hotel with innumerable chambers opening out of it. One room may contain a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next we may find a devoutly religious man; in a third there may be a scientist; and in the fourth a philosopher. They all own the corridor and use it in getting to or from their respective rooms. Thus the method produces no particular results but is an attitude of orientation which looks away from first things, principles, categories, a priori necessities and looks toward last things, fruits, consequences and facts.

To make the pragmatic method familiar James illustrated it by analyzing some metaphysical problems.[5] Every debate, no matter how abstract, must have some practical issue involved or else it is idle to spend time and energy in speculation. The first problem to be considered is that of substance. We must, at the outset, differentiate between substance as such and its modes, attributes, or properties. Substance is what a thing really is while the modes, attributes, and properties are what the substance is described as and what it appears to be. A coin appears to be of silver color, hard, circular, tasteless, and insoluble in water. These however are not the coin itself but the coin is the substance in which these attributes adhere. All we know of the coin is what we are able to discover from our perception of it, so a group of attributes becomes what the substance is known as. They are the "cash value" for actual experimental investigation.

If the attributes were not perceived by us we should never suspect the existence of the coin, or on the other hand, if the coin were to go out of existence and we continued to receive the attributes we should not be aware of its non-existence. In other words, as long as our experience continued unaltered we should be unaware of any change.

At first glance substance would seem to have few pragmatic consequences but scholasticism has long treated substance from the pragmatic point of view. In the historic dispute over transubstantiation, substance takes on momentous

pragmatic value. The accidents of the wafer or wine do not change so if a change takes place it must be in the substance alone. The bread and wine appear to remain the same but if a change does take place in the substance then it makes a real difference to the individual partaker because he is in reality feeding upon the body and blood of divinity.

If we allow that substances can separate from their accidents then we find it possible to apply pragmatism to the problem of substance. Otherwise the discussion is not germane and it is obvious that such a treatment will be made only by those who believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation on independent grounds.

The great problem of James's day was the question of materialism as opposed to theism. To this problem also the pragmatic rule is applied. By Materialism we do not mean the existence of material substance. One may deny the independent objectivity of matter and still be a disciple of Materialism which consists of "explaining higher phenomena by lower ones, and leaving the destiny of the world at the mercy of its blinder parts and forces".[6] The materialist or naturalist says that the laws of physical nature run things, and that mind developed as a result of physical laws. Over against this stands theism which says that mind was active in the creative process and that the world is being guided by its higher rather than its lower element.

This problem cannot be settled by an aesthetic distinction. It is idle to claim that matter is gross and coarse,

while spirit is pure, elevated and noble and hence has primacy because it appears superior. Herbert Spencer has shown us that the matter which is postulated by modern science is not gross. Matter, according to Spencer, is more subtile and finer than the conception of spirit which we have held. If matter can produce a beautiful life than matter itself must be beautiful and not crass.

The pragmatist asks what practical difference can it make if the world is run by matter or by spirit. This gives the problem an entirely different character.

It makes no difference as far as the past of the world is concerned whether we conceive it to be the work of matter or spirit. The world is here, and if we call matter the cause we are merely attributing to matter the ability to make such a world. If, on the other hand, we say that God is the cause we are merely saying God has the same power which the atom seems to possess. Matter and God mean the same thing--namely, the power to create just such a world as this--and dispute is idle.

The problem takes on a different conplexion when we assume that the world is incomplete at the present time and has a future as well as a past. In an unfinished world the alternative between materialism and theism has meaning which may be tested by the pragmatist. The question is what do the rival views promise? If matter promises ultimate success then we shall worship matter for a God would be superfluous.

According to the naturalists matter does have a future. They see the decay of energy; the earth dead and run down; man wiped out and his monuments, thoughts and deeds turned to ashes; and ultimately nothing left but dead islands afloat on a friendless cosmic sea. Opposed to this theism guarantees that an ideal order shall be permanently preserved. A world with a God may be finally destroyed but the values of that world will be preserved and brought to fruition elsewhere. Pragmatically, materialism is a denial that the moral order is eternal and theism is the affirmation that the moral order will ultimately be triumphant. Here is the difference as brought to light by the application of the pragmatic method.

All other metaphysical problems can in like manner be examined by the pragmatic method and we test their value and meaning by examining their practical consequences. We ask ourselves what difference it makes to us whether we accept materialism or spiritualism, determinism or free will, monism or pluralism, atheism or theism. On pragmatic principles the hypothesis which works most satisfactorily is, in the widest sense of the term, true.

The second aspect of pragmatism is as a theory of truth. Truth is a property of certain ideas and means their agreement with reality. James finds here a common ground with the intellectualists but they part company again in the question of what is meant by "agreement" and "reality". The intellectualist's view of the matter is that truth means

an inert static relation. When truth is reached that is the end of the matter. James contends that such an end is never reached. The pragmatist asks the usual question as to what practical difference it will make in one's actual life. In other words what is the truth's "cash value" in experiential terms. We may say of truth that it is true because it is useful and also useful because it is true. "True ideas", says James, "are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those which we cannot."[7] There is a practical difference to us in having true ideas for truth is an attribute of ideas rather than of reality. "The true, to put it briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving."[8]

Since truth is of ideas and not of reality then it has no stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea for the idea can become either true or false. The process of becoming true is the idea verifying itself. This process is the idea's verification and the validity of the idea is the process of its validation. The words verificatataion and validation mean agreement with reality in the ordinary sense. Here we ask what we mean by agreement and discover that it means a leading toward. Verification comes now to mean an agreeable leading from the idea toward reality which, although it may result in the modification of the original idea does not contradict it.

"True" and "useful" were James's favorite words in his

discussion of pragmatism. To him, the words mean practically the same thing for ideas would never have been called "true", a word which suggests value, if they were not useful. "True" is seen to be the name for whatever idea starts the process of verification and "useful" is the name for its completed function in experience.

James agrees with the rationalists in their insistence that there are certain "eternal" truths. One and two always equal three and white always differs less from gray than from black. This however is a matter of relationship and this relationship is mental rather than extra-mental. Truth again is seen to be a matter of leading. We relate one abstraction to another and build a system but that system agrees with reality only when the relationship is correct. Realities can mean either concrete objects or abstract principles and the relationship between them. True ideas are ideas which most accurately agree with these realities. It is here that James again parts company with the intellectualists. To agree does not necessarily mean to copy but as we have seen it means verification or agreeable leading. To agree with a reality, in the pragmatic sense of the word, means "to be guided either straight up to it or into its surroundings, or to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed".[9]

To copy a reality is of course agreement with it but such copying is not essential and because of our perceptual

limitations impossible of absolute verification. The essential thing is the process of being guided. Any idea which helps us to deal with the reality in a helpful way will, to all purposes, agree, and such an idea will be true of reality.

Most of our true ideas can never be verified--such as our ideas of events in past history--but they find their verification in the present effects of the past. If our ideas of the past agree with the effects of the past then they are true and the past is guaranteed by its coherence with the present.

Truth changes as new experiences are brought to us and we are forever attempting to discover theories that will work. To do so we must find a theory which will mediate between all previous truths and our new experiences. Thus we have a demand for consistency. Truth is now seen to be that expedient in our thinking which will give the greatest amount of ultimate satisfaction and at the same time be consistent. Scientific truth is that which gives us the maximum amount of satisfaction but "consistency both with previous truth and with novel fact is always the most imperious claimant".[10]

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

1. Pragmatism, p 65.
2. Ibid, p 45.
3. Ibid, p 54.
4. Ibid, p 54.
5. Ibid, Lecture III.
6. Ibid, p 93.
7. Ibid, p 201.
8. The Meaning of Truth, p VII, Pragmatism, p 222.
9. Pragmatism, p 212 ff.
10. Ibid, p 217.

PART THREE

CHAPTER THREE

Pluralism

William James was convinced that the central problem which faced philosophy was that of monism vs. pluralism.[1] Since the consequences of a choice are so great it is to this problem that the pragmatic method is most vigorously applied. Philosophy is often defined as a quest for unity and this is a true definition as far as it goes for philosophy has always interested itself in a unification of knowledge seeking by this method to get a complete picture of life and the cosmos. However there is variety in life which is not irrelevant. What we are really seeking is neither unity nor variety as such, but totality. In this quest it is as important that we understand the diversities of reality, as to know the connection.

Pluralism has been defended many times in the history of philosophy. Atomism inevitably led to that position and monadism implies the same pluralistic conclusions. James, however has very little in common with either Democritus or Leibnitz. His position is reached and defended for physical, metaphysical and religious reasons. In one sense, his pluralism is a revolt against absolutism for he felt that as long as it was impossible for him to be an absolutist he was of necessity driven to the other contending position.

Pluralism being then an anti-absolutistic position as

well as a means of moral and religious values, James defines it in various ways. Pluralism is the theory of "a world imperfectly unified still"[2], in which possibility and potentiality are resident. It is further the theory that the "sundry parts of reality may be externally related"[3] rather than being parts of the unified whole.

James insists that the world is One for otherwise it could not be a world at all. This oneness, however, is not a mystical or magical unity which we must worship. The question is not whether or not the world is a unity--we know the answer to that--the question is how is the world unified. The answer to this question is found by the use of the pragmatic method which concerns itself with the practical values involved.

The world is one as a subject of discourse but this is not proof of the monist's position for a "chaos" has as much unity of discourse as a cosmos. The word "universe" can well mean a union of distinct parts. Is this unity continuous or discontinuous? It makes a great practical difference whether our universe hangs together or is separated into parts which have a "nextness" like grains of sand. James holds that space and time are the vehicles of the continuity of the world's parts. Otherwise the perception must be the same as that which is perceived and there is no extramental world.

Things are joined together by lines of influence which bind the parts into a system. These lines of influence are

analagous to a vast network of acquaintanceship.[4] Brown knows Jones, Jones knows Smith, Smith knows Green, etc; so by choosing in each instance the right intermediary there is seen to be a connection between Brown and all other people in the inhabited world. Many such lines of influence exist, some more extensive and enveloping than others and some superimposed upon others. The world is seen to be One in just so far as the parts cohere and adhere to each other, but no farther. Causal unity as opposed to the notion of an eternal self-existing many in the form of atoms or spiritual units is one of the alternatives which James mentions although he does not develop the implications of either idea. In like manner he treats generic unity.

James, because of his belief in the objectivity of evil, refuses to concede an absolute teleological unity. The transcendental idealism of a Bradley or a Royce takes us no farther than the book of Job--God's ways are not to be questioned--and we fail to make any progress at all.

James calls the idea of an "all enveloping noetic unity" the sublimest achievement of intellectualist philosophy[5] but it makes no difference whether this world is a universe or a multiverse for such a noetic unity could exist in either type. In either a monistic or pluralistic world noetic unity could obtain.

Pragmatism, then, meliorates between the two ideas of pluralism and monism and since the two horns of the problem

have different ethical appeals to different people[6] we choose the one which is best suited to our own natures. The "tender minded" take refuge in the benign care of the Absolute while the "tough minded" accept the challenge of an incomplete world in which they may realize latent possibilities. James felt that religion does not call us to be losers in the game of life but it calls us in the words of Ezekiel to "stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee". The dangers, losses, and suffering of the world are real but so also are victories and achievements.

There are many specific applications of pluralism which are suggested by the pragmatic approach. The first is the application of the theory to epistemology. Knowledge is incomplete otherwise we would not be arguing about it. This fact should not discourage us for knowledge grows but this growth is piecemeal and not otherwise. Some parts of knowledge are unrelated to other parts. The relationship is not in any sense constitutive for one man's knowledge is independent of that of another man which suggests that the objects of knowledge are as independent of each other as are the subjects. We know only particulars, and concepts are only means to more knowledge of particulars. This is called by James the "additive" nature of knowledge being a system of "concatenated knowing, going from next to next"[7] which grows as we seek and find more information.

Monism must have a relationship <u>durcheinander</u> in which the meaning of each particular is implicit in the meaning

of every other. Pluralism on the other hand implies a relationship which is external whereby a thing can pick up or drop other things without losing its own identity. It is now clear that relationships are possible but not necessary.

The same relationship which holds in the realm of concepts is also true of reality so pluralism is also a theory of reality. Reality is additive. James lays much stress upon selection showing it to be the chief function of consciousness and of sensation. In a world of "pure" experience novelty consists in new groupings of given elements. Thus selection is creative in that we humanly make additions to given data. For example, when we gaze into the heavens and select certain patterns which we call constellations we are taking the world as formless and molding it to suit our purposes. All the evidence goes to prove that each bit of reality has its own external environment for "things are with one another in various ways, but nothing includes everything, or dominates over everything".[8] The human additions are suggestive of the way in which reality itself grows.

James explains the pluralistic nature of reality by contrasting a "concatenated" with a "consolidated" union. Gravitation is the only true example of consolidation which we know and is a true monistic principle binding all matter together in one inexorable synthesis. We have, however, many examples of concatenation. Labor unions, postal

systems, etc. bind us together in wide reticulations. Some of our systems involve others, while some do not. We cannot have a telephone without wire and copper connections but we can have wire and copper connections without having a telephone. We cannot have love without acquaintance but we may have acquaintance without love. From this point of view the world hangs together from "next to next" in such a variety of ways that we can drop out of one system and not be out of the world because we are still in other systems.[9] The total unity of the world is, from this point of view, the sum of all the partial unities.

The final application of pluralism is to the realm of personal spirits. It leads to the assumption of a collectivism of personal lives, human and superhuman, which are "variously cognitive of each other, variously conative or impulsive, genuinely evolving and changing by effort and trial, and by their inter-action and cumulative achievements making up the world".[10] This view has theistic implications which will be discussed in a later chapter. The discussion of individualism and democracy which are inevitable corollaries of pluralism must also be postponed.

As was characteristic of James, he is able to see both sides to the question and he does not hesitate to pay tribute to the advantages of monism. Aside from the idea of noetic unity previously mentioned he credits monism with a natural affinity with certain kinds of religious faith and an emotional value in its conception of the world as a single unitary fact. Its disadvantages however are fourfold.

In the first place monism does not account for finite consciousness. If nothing exists but as the Absolute knows it then nothing can exist which the Absolute mind does not know. The second disadvantage is that monism creates a problem of evil. If Perfection is the source then there should be no imperfection. As James once remarked to his class "if at the last day all creation was shouting hallelujah and there remained one cockroach with unrequited love, that would spoil the universal harmony".[11]

The third failure of monism is that it contradicts the character of reality as we experience it perceptually. Change is an essential ingredient in our world. There is history, novelty, struggle, gain and loss. The world of the Absolute must be above time, eternal, and unchanging. This is foreign to our powers of apprehension or appreciation. Monism can only meet this objection by treating the sense-world as a mirage or illusion.

Finally, Monism, is fatalistic. Possibility, as distinguished from necessity and impossibility, is an essential category of human thinking, but for monism it is an illusion. If the world is a closed unit then there is no possibility of novelty. Pluralism, on the other hand, accepts the possibility of novelty which is "free will".

Pluralism has its own disadvantages in that it is an intolerable idea to most people and lacks the religious certainty of monism. Then too, since it is neither opti-

mistic nor pessimistic, but melioristic it must admit the possibility of failure as well as the possibility of success. The world may be saved or the world may be shipwrecked. This weakness of pluralism--its open possibilities--was probably its strongest appeal to James for he was always prone to respond to any challenge which gave promise of leading him into fields where the battle was hardest. George Santayana once said that James would have been disappointed had he found a final solution to any problem as his interest was in the problem as such and not in its solution. In his defence of pluralism, James finds three values which are not in the opposing philosophy.[12]

In the first place pluralism is more "scientific" in that it is consistent with phenomenal appearance. The world is changing and pluralism is consonant with the universe with its "concrete facts, their awful bewilderments, their surprises and cruelties".[13] Each fact asserts itself as a brute fact uncalled for by the rest. While pluralism admits of an irrationality the alternative is irrational in a deeper way in that it must exclude certain recognizable existential facts.

The second value of pluralism is its agreement with the moral and dramatic expressiveness of life. Pluralism admits real possibilities and real indeterminations. It has real beginning and real ends as well as real evil, real crises, real catastrophes, real escapes, a real God, and a real moral life.[14] The world's salvation is depend-

ent upon the energizing of its several parts including ourselves. This is the stimulating and challenging view for we may by our behavior remedy some of the evils and disconnections.

Finally, pluralism gives us a religious intimacy. Man is a co-worker with God. The "older theism" makes man an outsider, subject to God but this view makes man God's intimate and valued partner. By exorcising the absolute pluralism gains for man freedom from an "essential foreignness", and makes the Deity approachable.

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. Pragmatism, p 129.
2. Ibid, p 161.
3. A Pluralistic Universe, p 321.
4. Pragmatism, p 135.
5. Ibid, p 145.
6. A Pluralistic Universe, p 327.
7. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 129 f.
8. A Pluralistic Universe, p 321.
9. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 131.
10. Collected Essays and Reviews, p 444.
11. Quoted from Santayana, Character and Opinion in the United States, by Bixler, J. S., Religion in the Philosophy of William James, p 59.
12. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 142 f.
13. Pragmatism, p 22.
14. The Will to Believe, p IX.

PART THREE

CHAPTER FOUR

Belief and the Will

In the summer of 1895, James delivered his famous address on "The Will to Believe" at a Summer school which was sponsored by Felix Adler. The address was later repeated at the Philosophical Clubs of Yale and Brown Universities and then published in the "New World" in June, 1896, before finding its way into the collection which was published in book form.

James called the address "a sermon on justification by faith"[1] and intended it to be a defense of the right of man to adopt a believing attitude in matters of religion, in spite of the fact that the intellect may not see grounds for the venture of faith. James lays groundwork for his thesis by giving the name "hypothesis" to any proposition that may be suggested to our belief. A hypothesis may be either alive or dead depending upon its appeal as a real possibility. A proposition which would appeal to an Oriental would have no such vitality for the occidental mind proving that the aliveness or deadness of a hypothesis is not its intrinsic property, but is in relation to the mind of the individual thinker. Vitality is here measured by the willingness of the thinker to act and the degree of vitality is measured by the degree of the willingness.

We are called upon to make decisions between alternative

hypotheses and these are "options". Options may be of several kinds. In the first place an option may be living or dead. A living option is one where both hypotheses are alive and it is dead when neither hypothesis has any appeal. Then, an option may be either forced or avoidable. It is avoidable when we offer such alternatives as love or hate, for it is possible to do neither. On the other hand the option is forced when the dilemma is based on a complete logical disjunction with no possibility of not choosing. To believe or not to believe is such a forced option. In the third place, an option may be momentous or trivial depending upon the results which follow. Options which are unique, where the stake is significant, or where the decision is irreversible, are momentous options.

Certain facts exist which cannot be modified by acts of our passional or volitional natures. It would be preposterous to will to believe that Abraham Lincoln never lived or that the few dollars in our pockets are several hundred. These however are dead hypotheses but they have been killed by previous action of our volitional nature. We believe in atoms, molecules, the conservation of energy, progess, democracy and other theories and principles but these things we cannot conclusively prove. Our intellect is satisfied if we can find a few arguments but for most of us the belief preceded the reasons. This is faith and in most instances is once removed, for it is faith in some one else's faith. Our belief in truth itself is but a

passionate affirmation of desire. We want to have truth and want to believe that we can discover truth, and on this venture of faith we stake our lives.

We believe those things which appeal to us and disbelieve all propositions and theories for which we have no use. Huxley belabored bishops because he had no use for sacerdotalism, but Newman, on the other hand, went over to Romanism because a priestly system appealed to his nature. The logicians who would rule our willing nature out are motived by the same thing for they are trying to exclude all elements for which they have no use.

It being true that pure insight and logic are not the only things that act in the production of our beliefs, we must ask whether this is normal or if it is reprehensible and pathological. James holds that in cases where the intellect cannot select an option because of insufficient evidence then "our passional natures not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions".[2] If we were to refuse to decide and hold the question open that itself would be a passional decision and be attended with the same risk of losing the truth.

Moral questions, for instance, present themselves and cannot wait for proof. It is not a question of what exists but rather of what is good, or would be good if it did exist. Science can tell us what exists but science deals in quantitative terms and cannot tell us the worth of that which does, does not, or should exist. The question of whether

or not we are to have any moral beliefs at all is decided by our will. If our will does not desire a world of moral reality then the intellect can never make us believe in one. Scepticism, either moral or intellectual, can neither be proven nor refuted by logic so the will to believe is as normal and as competent as either logic or science and in the field of morals it is supreme.

In the matter of personal relationships the will is also supreme for these relationships are states of mind between one man and another which cannot be accounted for by pure reason. Affection cannot wait on objective evidence but the reason follows after and bolsters the act of volition. Since a social organism is a social state of mind the same thing is true in the relations of society. Forward social movement can be made only when there is in existence a precursive faith in others. Without this, society could not exist much less accomplish results. But given faith in each other and faith in the possibility of the object to be achieved, a government, an army, a commercial system, a college, or an athletic team can make possibility become actuality. Here are cases where a prior faith is necessary to the fact and where faith in a fact can help create the fact.

It is obvious, then, that faith based upon desire is not only legitimate but at times is indispensable. Does this apply also to great cosmic matters like religious faith? James not only answers this question in the affirmative but

sees in such an affirmation the crowning purpose of the believing will. Science says that things exist; morality tells us that things are qualitative in value; and religion says essentially two things.[3]

First, religion tells us that the best things are the eternal things, and the second affirmation of religion tells us that we are better off if we accept as true her first postulate. This is the hypothesis of religion. As such it is a living option else we would not bother to discuss it at all. It is also a momentous option in that we are supposed to gain by our belief and lose by our non-belief, a certain vital good. Then, the hypothesis presents a forced option as far as that good is concerned. We cannot escape the issue by holding judgment in abeyance for, although we might avoid error if religion is untrue, we lose the good if the hypothesis is true. Scepticism is not an avoidance of option but it is an option carrying its own risk. The sceptic chooses to risk loss of truth rather than a chance of error. To claim the wisdom of such an option is to declare that it is better to yield to our fear of error than to yield to our hope! If we are to be victims of dupery is it not better, asks James, to be dupes of our hopes than of our fears?

Religion comes to us in another and further way which makes its denial even more illogical. Religion represents the world as being personal. The cosmos is no longer "It" but has become a "Thou". In such a universe the relation-

ships which are possible between man and man are also possible between man and the universe. The logician who shuts himself up in his logic is in danger of cutting off his only opportunity to make the god's acquaintance. If the religious hypothesis is false then we are doing the universe a service to affirm its truth, but if it is true then we are being absurd by refusing to make willing advances.

In abstracto we have the right to believe at our own risk anything which is tempting to the will. This does not imply a blind unreasoning faith for there is a necessary agnosticism because of the ultimate intractability of data. The intellect must do all that it can but where reason cannot be satisfied then the will can represent the world to its own satisfaction. So James argues that in concreto the freedom to believe covers only living options which the intellect cannot resolve. If we were possessed of infallible intellects then we might dispense with the will to believe. However we never know fully when we have grasped truth so it is idle to wait for complete intellectual assurance.

Because of the insufficiency of evidence and the demands of life, every important decision is to a certain extent a leap in the dark. If we choose to turn our backs on God then it is our own risk. James sums up his position by a quotation from Fitz James Stephens, "We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death.

If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? 'Be strong and of good courage'. Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes."

James was the target for a storm of criticism which followed upon the publication of his "Will to Believe". One critic, John Jay Chapman, wrote him that he had been too conservative, "The faith you begin to talk about has been so justified and bolstered, and drugged up and down, and ironed and wired--damme if I call that faith".[4] To this James replied, "Damme if I call that faith, either. It is only calculated for the sickly hotbed atmosphere of the philosophic positivistically enlightened scientific classroom.... In my individual heart I fully believe my faith is as robust as yours."[5] Most of the critics, however, felt that James had gone too far and he was ridiculed by people speaking of the "will to deceive" or the "will to dishonesty". James replied that his choice of words was unfortunate for his sole purpose was to show man's "right" to believe. Twice in later works he refers to what he calls a "faith-ladder". The successive steps are built of the expressions of our good will toward certain results. These expressions of good will James calls "faith tendencies" which as psychological forces do not necessarily wait for evidence. It will be noted that in the "faith-ladder" showing how belief enters the mind, not one of the steps is logical:

"A conception of the world arises in you somehow, no matter how. Is it true or not? you ask.

"It <u>might</u> be true somewhere, you say, for it is not self contradictory.

"It <u>may</u> be true, you continue, ever here and now.

"It is <u>fit</u> to be true, it would be <u>well if it were true</u>, it <u>ought</u> to be true, you presently feel.

"It <u>must</u> be true, something persuasive in you whispers next, and then--as a final result--

"It shall be <u>held for true</u>, you decide; it <u>shall be</u> as if it were true for <u>you</u>."[6]

The metaphysical and religious alternatives which are offered to us are not such that we can remain in inaction so the "right" to believe has become the "necessity" to believe, for belief is always the motivation of action. We are individual members of an incomplete pluralistic universe and all forces working together will produce the final result. We cannot be sure that all other factors will cooperate with us and our good will and labor may be wasted. We are offered four attitudes which we may take in regard to the other powers: First, we may follow the advice of the intellectualists and wait for evidence and do nothing while waiting; secondly, we may mistrust the other powers and being sure that the universe will fail, let it fail; thirdly, we may trust them, or at any rate do our best in spite of the "if"; or finally, we may flounder about, taking one attitude one day and another the next. The first and second attitudes are essentially the same and both spell failure, and the fourth is manifestly no systempatic solu-

tion. This leaves us the third as the only wise way.

Hence we not only have a "right" to believe but the pluralistic world gives to us an imperative. We must do our best and to do this we must have a precursive trust. The perfection of the universe itself awaits our action and our action awaits our faith for "faith is the readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in advance. It is the same moral quality which we call courage in practical affairs."[8]

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. The Will to Believe, p 1.
2. Ibid, p 11.
3. Ibid, p 25.
4. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, p 236.
5. Ibid, p 237.
6. A Pluralistic Universe, pp 328 f, also in a slightly different form in Some Problems of Philosophy, p 224.
7. Some Problems of Philosophy, p 229 f.
8. The Will to Believe, p 90.

PART THREE

CHAPTER FIVE

Ethics and Moral Philosophy

There is a decided moral accent prominent in the life and thought of William James but he wrote very little on the subject of ethics or moral philsophy. He subordinated thought to action and so in principle accepted the Kantian doctrine of the "primacy of practical reason". This is almost the entire burden of his work, and his inattention to the traditional theories and problems of ethics is offset by the dynamic of his moral convictions and his own rigorous moral code.

James mentions three problems of ethics which the moral philosopher must keep from confusing.[1] He calls them the psychological question which asks about the historical origin of our moral ideas; the metaphysical question which asks the meaning of such words as 'good', 'ill', and 'obligation'; and the casuistic question which asks the measure of the various goods and ills which are recognized by man.

For most people the psychological question is the only one of importance but to explain the origin of a thing is not necessarily to pass on its value. James devotes an entire lecture in his Varieties to proving that origin must not be confused with value. The Benthams, the Mills and the Bains have made valuable contributions but their utilitarianism and associationism are inadequate. Many of our ideas

can be accounted for in this way but moral ideas are "quite inexplicable except by an innate preference of the more ideal attitude for its own pure sake."[3] Inward forces are at work and the higher and more penetrating ideals present themselves less in the guise of effects of past experience than in that of probable causes of future experiences.

Turning to the metaphysical question, James argues that the words 'good', 'ill', and 'obligation' cannot have meaning apart from the existence of sentient life. If this were a purely physical world without minds, either divine or human, then there could be no good or evil but as long as there is an interrelationship of minds there are real goods, real ills, and binding obligations. Whether God exists or not we form an ethical republic here below. Humanism thus affords a basis for ethics as truly as does theism but where God exists the demands of ethics are more impelling than in a world where human consciousness is the highest criterion. This is James's postulation of God as necessary to a vital ethic.

The answer to the casuistic question must be a practical one if we are to find any satisfaction in it. James refuses to accept any of the historic criteria for measuring value but tries to answer the question for himself. The highest good is that which satisfies claims or demands which are the result of the interaction of minds. That act is best which satisfies the greatest number of demands and which makes for the best whole in the sense of awakening the least sum of dissatisfactions. Demands are subjective in that they

are personal so the criterion of good is personality.

On the whole a philosophy of ethics is not possible in the absolute sense of the term chiefly because an ethic must wait on metaphysical and theological beliefs. We must be ready to revise our conclusions from day to day so we take experience as it comes instead of depending upon a priori rules. In his enthusiasm for the empirical attitude James makes a strong defense for radicalism. It would be folly for most of us to strike out independently and shape our own ethic but occasionally one is born with the right to be original and his revolutionary thought or action may bear good fruit. Such a one "may replace old 'laws of nature' by better ones; he may, by breaking old moral rules in a certain place, bring in a total condition of things more ideal than would have followed had the rules been kept."[4]

Abstract rules are not to be discarded however, but we must keep in mind that "rules are made for man and not man for the rules". An ethical treatise may be voluminous and also luminous but it can never be final except in the vaguest and abstractest way. There is in ethics but one unconditional and unchangeable commandment which is to "seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see".[5] Abstract rules and theories help but each real dilemma is truly a unique situation and must be decided in a unique way.

James draws the distinction between the easy-going and

the strenuous moods in the moral life of man. The easy-going mood makes us shrink from present ill while the strenuous mood makes us indifferent to all but the ideal which is to be attained. The capacity for such a strenuous mood lies slumbering in every man but it needs big fears, loves, and indignations or else the deeply penetrating appeal of a higher fidelity like justice, truth, or freedom, to arouse it from its lethargy. Religion can do this. When we believe that God is one of the claimants ideals become imperative and they speak with a new objectivity and significance. The capacity for such a mood lies so deep down among our human possibilities that even if we had no metaphysical or traditional grounds for belief in God it would be necessary for men to postulate God "simply as a pretext for living hard, and getting out of the game of existence its keenest possibilities of zest".[6] Evil appears worse and the ideal better in a world where God exists, and the zeal to destroy the first and realize the second can come only through a religious faith. The strenuous type of character will always outwear the other kind and for this reason religion will inevitably drive irreligion to the wall.

The ethical corollary of James's pluralism was his belief in the value of the individual. It was the conflict with the rights of the individual which caused him to first discard the absolute. James has been criticized for devoting so much time to the "varieties" of religious exper-

ience and neglecting its institutionalization but such a treatment of the subject was expressive of his individualism. He felt that institutions often defeat their own ends and stand in the way of the individual. The organized life of men must be based upon their likenesses but its purpose must be to make room for the adequate expression of their differences. "The individual", says James, "the person in the singular number, is the more fundamental phenomenon, and the social institution, of whatever grade, is but secondary and ministerial".[7] The best organization is always that which leaves the largest scope to the peculiarities of men.

Growing out of his feeling of the value of the individual was James's endorsement of democracy. This was not to him an abstract ideal but one for which he could work. His democracy included alien cultures and traditions and showed itself in his many and vigorous protests against the American occupation of the Philippines. Men are worth loving and must be respected regardless of their station in the world and from this inherent value each individual may draw self-respect.

Tolerance is an essential part of the same individualistic ethic. In his lecture on immortality James tells his hearers that the desires for immortality of the Chinese or the Hottentots are as much to be considered and respected as those of the cultured Bostonians. His tolerance was so broad that he was sincerely willing "that every leaf that

ever grew in the world's forests and rustled in the breeze should become immortal".[8] The best illustration of this same tolerance is found in the relationship which existed between James and his colleagues. He was not wholly in agreement or sympathy with a single one of them yet he did not merely suffer their existence but rather he rejoiced in it, and hoped that each would in his own way make a contribution to the total knowledge of the world. His letters are filled with praise of those with whom he could not agree and in each instance his commendation is strongest for that which is most unlike himself.[9]

This tolerant spirit often involved James with "cranks" which caused him to lose much time and money but he was perfectly willing to suffer the losses. He is supposed to have been blinded by compassion but the truth is that he was usually well aware of the type of person with whom he was dealing and whenever he was kind to a crank he knew that it was a crank to whom he was being kind.

Freedom of the will is basic in the Jamesian philosophy and is assumed in each one of his several doctrines. Freedom defined as "the possibility of novelty", cannot be proven on psychological or philosophical grounds but must be assumed because of ethical considerations. If there is no freedom then moral and religious values are either static or unattainable. Given freedom and the priority of the individual then we have the possibility of the "heroic" life of the individual which is in the last analysis the

only significant and worthwhile life.

Courage, struggle and risk are the true expression of the strenuous life. In a single word "heroism" is the thing that makes life worth living. The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it. Man is not essentially strong enough for the adventurous life but there are great reserves of strength which may be tapped. We have already noted that religious belief is one of these reserves. Love, anger, desire and despair are others which enable man to live beyond his own strength. The history of religion, war and discovery abundantly illustrate the possibilities of extraordinary endurance and sustained effort. It is not a question of physical effort, for human work may involve the use of energy in a more refined form. Unusual circumstances always, if we are sympathetic and responsive, generate exceptional inner power. This phenomena has its metaphysical implication because of the sudden removal of barriers and the tapping of the greater reservoir of consciousness. The ethical implication lies in the fact that here is the source of moral living and the means of making life radiant and valuable.

James saw the paradox which is created by the conflict of the ethic of individual self assertion, expressed in agression and militancy with the motive of sympathy which appreciates the individuality of others and which finds its expression in conciliation, social utility and peace. There is an oscillation between the two in the philosophy of James

but in the last analysis he preferred the humanity of peace to the cruel heroism of war. We may, however, give the principle of sympathy priority over the principle of self-assertion and still preserve the militant and heroic qualities. This can be done by making the principle of sympathy a "moral equivalent of war" for sympathy itself is a cause which calls for moral and even physical courage.

There are two enemies which we may fight without inhumanity. The first is physical nature. An ideal of the field of ethics is found in the struggle of human interests against the material environment. The second enemy is found within humanity and is anything which weakens, resists or opposes the moral will. A fight against these foes calls for all the militant virtues such as courage, strength, endurance, fidelity, loyalty, and energy. Here is a vital and worthwhile sublimation of the martial spirit. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline can "be wrought into the growing fibre of the people",[10] but without the cruelty, excesses and degradation which accompany war.

No consideration of the moral philosophy of James can be complete without a mention of his moral dualism. He was aware of the tragic element in life and refused to eliminate it from his religious view of the world. Evil is real and objective and entirely divorced from Good. The part of righteousness is to live and work for the good and at the same time to hate and attempt to destroy evil with equal whole-heartedness. To hate evil does not mean to brood over

it but rather to struggle against its influences. The problem of evil is too real and pressing to be passed over lightly, and while for absolutism the problem is a speculative one as to the origin of evil, for James the problem was a practical one of how to get rid of it. The problem is logical only in so far as it is expressed in logical terms but the issues are vital and challenging.

The heroic life is the life which gives itself in the battle for good and opposes evil. There is here the possibility of a fundamental ambiguity in the thought of James which he hastens to reconcile. On the one hand he hated evil and on the other hand he finds the redeeming quality of life in the heroism which can exist only when there is a real evil to be fought against. Is evil, then, an indispensable condition for good? No, replies James, for if we admit even a slight complicity then we are condoning evil. We cannot believe that obstacles are placed in our way for moral effect. The fight is real and there are real risks and real obstacles. The conditions of the significant life are not designed for a purpose but are accidental and not intended. These conditions do occur and we accept them but the measure of good is the extent to which we are able to change them.

The moral philosophy of William James was not for him an abstraction but rather was the basis for his own social activities.[11] As a moral crusader he was active in many different fields, lending his support toward social reform.

He worked for the cause of temperance; for educational reform; against imperialism; against lynching; for a truer patriotism; and for the recognition and advancement of mental hygiene. Rarely has such a wholesome philosophy of ethics been combined with such a crusading zeal. His exemplification of his own ideals has been the guarantee of their appeal to successive generations.

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

1. The Will to Believe, p 185
2. Lecture I.
3. The Will to Believe, p 187.
4. Ibid, p 208.
5. Ibid, p 209.
6. Ibid, p 213.
7. Memories and Studies, p 102.
8. Human Immortality, p 44.
9. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, p 269 ff.
10. Memories and Studies, p 276.
11. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, Ch. LXVIII.

PART THREE

CHAPTER SIX

Experience Vs. Philosophy

Empiricism defends the thesis that experience is a better guide to truth than formal and abstract logic. James carried this same thesis into religion, defending it in his Gifford lectures which were subsequently published as The Varieties of Religious Experience. The expressed purpose of his compilation of the data of religious experience was twofold.[1] First, he was defending, against the prejudices of the sophisticated class, "experience" against "philosophy" as being the real backbone of the religious life of the world. Prayer and guidance which are privately felt have more validity than generalized views of the world. The second purpose was to prove that, although the creeds and theories of religions may have been absurd, the religious life is man's most important function.

Religion is something more primordial than reason and is of equal if not superior authority. The struggle between faith and reason seems to be between the less articulate and more profound part of our nature attempting to hold out against the attempts of a more superficial and loquacious part to supress it. The profounder part believes, but it can say so little It should not be cowed but should be developed for here is the deepest and wisest

thing in a man's life regardless of what reason may contend. There is a breach between the demands of reason and the irrational instinctive emotions which are more vital. In religion the mystical overbeliefs proceed from an ultra-rational region coming to us with a voice of authority. They are gifts and must be so recognized, as the measure of the abundance of life depends upon how we regard them.[2]

Religion is not a secondary product growing out of a certain view of the world but has its own independent and direct evidence. It is questionable whether there can ever be a popular religion of a philosophical character for there can be no vitality in a religion without "the presence of that element which in the past has presided over the origin of all religions, namely a belief in new physical facts and possibilities. Abstract considerations about the soul....will not do in a year what the glimpse into a world of new phenomenal possibilities....will do in an instant."[3] Theological formulas are the secondary products for there could be no philosophic theology without prior experience.

Although men will always attempt to pour the contents of religion into a philosophic mold these attempts can in no way add to or detract from the authority and veracity of the stimulus from which they derive. This is not to be taken as a castigation of philosophy for James argues that it is always necessary to attempt to interpret the prior fact. However the interpretation will always be inadequate to the

fact, for religion is essentially private and individualistic and not given to philosophic generalizations.

The authority of the religious experience is not to be taken without question but must be tested by its "immediate luminousness", "philosophical reasonableness", and "moral helpfulness".[4] James was always vitally interested in mysticism although he was critical of its implied monism and its dogmatic supernaturalism. He proposes as an alternative a pluralistic mysticism and an experimental supernaturalism. With these in mind we may apply the above tests to the mystical experience.

Mystical experiences are direct evidences of fact for those who have them, and are consistent with science due to the psychological hypothesis of a subliminal self. The psychic state is not a single isolated idea but is a "stream of consciousness" composed of a succession of ideas. Psychic states differ in extent and the "margin" which surrounds the field of consciousness may vary greatly from one moment to another. The mystical moment is when the field of consciousness has widened and matters which usually are subliminal have come into view. It differs from the ordinary state in the matter of extent rather than in the matter of quality. The subconscious self consists largely of memories but is not limited to this for "the conscious person is continuous with a wider self".[5] Thus the immediate luminousness has not only a subjective but also an objective quality.

The very fact of the many varieties of mystical experiences seems to contradict philosophical reasonableness but pluralism solves this problem and the theory of an experimental supernaturalism gives meaning and purpose to the varieties. Dogmatism can have no place in a world where the "higher order" expresses itself in different ways to different persons. Finally, the "moral helpfulness" is evident as the mystical experience will "render the soul more energetic",[6] and impart a sense of opportunity and responsibility on the part of the individual.

The mystical experience differs from other psychic states in four ways. It is <u>ineffable</u> because it is directly experienced and cannot be shared by those outside the experience. It is more like a state of feeling than a state of intellect and even as one must have an ear for music to appreciate a symphony, or be in love to understand a lover, so only the mystic can understand the mystic. Secondly, the mystical experience has a <u>noetic</u> quality which seems to give to the mystic insights into the depth of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect.

The other two qualities are less marked but are usually present. The experience usually is <u>transient</u>, for it is rare indeed that it can be sustained for any length of time. When the experience is gone it can be but imperfectly reproduced in memory but is easily recognized when it next occurs. The fourth quality is <u>passivity</u>. The mystic may induce the experience by physical or mental activity but after its beginning he feels as if his own will were in

abeyance and as if he were in the grip of a greater power. The consciousness of the mystic has become absorbed in a more complete and enveloping consciousness.

Early in his career James had made observations of the effects of nitrous oxide intoxication from which he had formed a conclusion which was never shaken. He concluded that the normal waking consciousness is but a certain type of consciousness while all about it, separated by the filmiest of screens, there lie "potential forms of consciousness entirely different".[7] Some of us go through life without suspecting this outer existence but once the proper stimulus is present it comes flooding in upon us. The anaesthetic revelation and the mystical experience are closely akin but there is a difference in that, although the artificially produced state meets the first two tests of "luminousness" and "philosophical reasonableness", it does not always meet the third test of "moral helpfulness".

The matter of the authority of the mystical experience engaged James's attention and he answers the question of the adequacy of mysticism in a three-fold way.

First, "mystical states, when well developed, usually are, and have the right to be, authoritative over the individuals to whom they come."[8] It is vain for rationalism to grumble about this, for, if the truth which comes to a man through the mystical experience proves to be a force he can live by, the majority has no mandate which can force him to live in another way. In matters of fact and in

point of logic his authority is outside our jurisdiction. In short, the mystic is invulnerable, and whether we like it or not, he must be left in undisturbed enjoyment of his creed.

But in the second place, no authority emanates from the mystical experiences "which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically".[9] The most that the mystic can ask is that we admit that their experience forms a presumption. There is no unanimity of experiences for they contain no specific intellectual content of their own. The mystics may be of the most diverse philosophies and theologies, provided only that they can find a place for the required peculiar emotional mood. Just as there is an ennobling mystical state there is also a "diabolical" mysticism which occurs in a delusional insanity such as paranoia. Here there is the same psychological mechanism at work and both types spring from the same subliminal or transmarginal regions. As long as we are not mystics we are compelled to test the value of the experience by empirical methods. Because an experience is called "mystical" it does not follow that it has an infallible credential, and the non-mystic is under no obligation to acknowledge a superior authority conferred by the intrinsic nature of the experience.

In the third place mystical states "break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic conscious-

ness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone. They show it to be only one kind of consciousness. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth, in which, so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely continue to have faith".[10] This conclusion is the one upon which James places the most emphasis. There is always the possibility that new truths come through the mystical experiences and they may be superior points of view from which we look out upon a more extensive and inclusive world. Let us reserve the right to be critical but we should not miss the opportunity of seeing wider vistas by closing our minds to such pregnant possibilities. In the same way that our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the material world, so it "is logically conceivable that <u>if there be</u> higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so <u>might be</u> our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them".[11] James goes on to add, "The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also."[12] Although these various worlds are, in the main, dept discrete, yet they become continuous at certain point and on such occasions higher energies filter in.

Science because of its predilection to materialism

can never, as it is now constituted, reach these conclusions. Philosophy, in so far as it seeks to unify and lump together data, is equally at sea. This need not disturb our faith for as we have seen the religious experience carries its own conviction and authority. We may go beyond science and logic and draw certain conclusions regarding the religious life.[13]

We may conclude that the visible is but a part of a more spiritual universe and that the visible universe draws its chief significance from the "higher order". This being true then the chief end of man is to attain union or harmonious relations with that higher universe. Then experience has proven to us that prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof--regardless of whether that spirit is 'God' or 'law'--is truly "a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological or material, within the phenomenal world."[14]

The study of experience shows us also that religion produces certain psychological characteristics. It gives to life a new zest which takes the form of a "lyrical enchantment" or else it comes as an irresistable appeal to heroism. Then, religion gives an assurance of safety and a feeling of peace which enables the individual to stand against the apparent cruelty of the world. Finally, in the matter of the relationship of the individual to his fellows, religion produces a "preponderance of loving affections".

The mystical experience is the doorway to over-beliefs.

It opens to us the other dimension of existence which is separate from the sensible and merely "understandable" world. In so far as our ideals originate in this other dimension we belong to it in a more intimate sense than we belong to the sensible world, for in the final analysis we belong where our ideals belong. Yet it is not correct to say that this other world is merely ideal for it produces definite effects in the visible world. When we experience the larger world, change takes place in our finite personalities and we become stronger and able to live in a larger, richer and more helpful way. It must be true that whatever produces a change in reality must be a reality itself so there can be no philosophical reason for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal.[15]

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

1. Letters, Vol. II, p 127.
2. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, pp 327-8. Drawn from notes made during James's preparation for the Gifford lectures.
3. Letters, Vol. I, pp 236-7.
4. Varieties of Religious Experience, p 18.
5. Ibid, p 515.
6. Ibid, p 415.
7. Ibid, p 388.
8. Ibid, p 422.
9. Ibid, p 422.
10. Ibid, p 423.
11. Ibid, p 242.
12. Ibid, p 519.
13. Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture XX.
14. Ibid, p 485.
15. Ibid, p 516.

PART THREE

CHAPTER SEVEN

Theism

In most theistic philosophies God is used as the starting point from which all ideas develop and by which they are tested. James reverses this process. He starts from many different points but all his ideas seem to converge and lead to a conception of God. Empiricism is wedded to religion; pluralism gives an insight into the nature of God; pragmatism reveals the value of the God-idea and encourages a positive belief; ethics requires a deity to make possible the strenuous life; our volitional activity may be the means of reaching the ultimate reality; and, the religious experience lends probability to the idea of God. All the diverse elements in the Jamesian philosophy meet here and testify to the existence of God.

James's conception of God underwent a development which is marked by three stages.[1] The distinction between these stages is not absolute and frequently it is only a matter of emphasis. The first stage finds its expression in The Will to Believe and Other Essays which cover the period between 1880 and 1895. The second position is shown in The Varieties of Religious Experience published in 1902, and the final stage in A Pluralistic Universe published in 1909 and Some Problems of Philosophy published after the death of James.

During the first period God is, for James, a stimulus

necessary to the strenuous and moral life. God is postulated in the interests of our active natures but the challenge always is "son of man stand upon thy feet". In a letter written in 1882[2] James is sympathetic with the ones who dislike the idea of God but finds that as "an ideal to attain and make probable, I find myself less and less able to do without him." To be acceptable a philosophy must make an appeal to our capacities for effort and any philosophy which stops short of God is inadequate for this purpose. God is that power outside of ourselves which "not only makes for righteousness, but means it, and which recognizes us".[3]

James was not interested in traditional theism and its definitions of God. God must be defined in terms which are commensurate with human needs. The things for which we have the most need are such things as energy, power, and moral activity. Thus an adequate definition of God must be formulated in terms of his function of arousing these in us. We need God as a stimulation so we postulate him to fill this need and define him as that which does fill it. Life is only worth living when we make it so by exerting ourselves. We have no positive knowledge of the objective world but we make it significant when we feel that the universe is fighting with and for us in the moral battle which we are called upon to wage. Life is a real battle and a god who was merely a witness could have no meaning to us, so we see him taking part in and vitally interested in the

conflict.

In the second stage of the Jamesian theism God is no longer defined merely in terms of his function of releasing power. He is still that, but the emphasis has shifted from man's active energies to God's saving power.[4] God comforts the sick-soul, encourages the energetic, integrates the disassociated personality, and challenges to saintliness. He is reached by the mystical experience; works changes through prayer; and gives us ground for a hopeful spirit. These experiences are so real that we are led inevitably to ascribe to them a real cause and this cause we call God. We no longer need to postulate a power outside ourselves but our problem is to describe the effects of that power which we feel all about ourselves.

James does not at this time neglect the active energies of man but he gives his greatest attention to the passive mood. The interest has, however, shifted from the capacity for action to the capacity to receive help from outside. The normal process of life cannot be always sustained at the highest level and we are all destined to taste the bitter dregs. It is, of course, better to be classed among the "healthy-minded" but the "sick-soul" also has a claim to consideration. Our refined optimisms and intellectual and moral consolations are remote in the presence of the desperate exigencies of life. The deliverance must at least be as powerful as the complaint and experience shows us that deliverance does come. There are times for

all of us when life's deepest need is not combat but peace. God is, in cases like this, the source of the peace which comes flooding in upon us.

Faith may hold a minimum of intellectual content without the faith being nullified, for it lives upon results. If God proves himself useful the religious consciousness asks for no more than that, and the question of God's existence and his nature is irrelevant. Faith can thus be defended from a subjective point of view but when we add a positive intellectual content the result is an articulated belief or a creed.

Under all the discrepancies of creeds there is a common nucleus which is present in all religions. First, an uneasiness or "a sense of something wrong about us as we stand" and secondly, "a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connections with the higher powers". Man becomes conscious of a "more" which is conterminous and continuous with himself which is operative in the universe and "which he can keep in touch with" and to which he can cling "when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck".[6]

This "higher power" or "more" is for us the supreme reality so we call it God. We and God have "business with each other".[7] and in as far as we open ourselves to his influence we fulfill our highest destiny. The part of the universe which our personal being constitutes is better or worse in proportion as we fulfill or evade God's demands.

This interrelationship is real and the results are real and it follows that God is real and objective.

Value points the way to truth and the particular facts of experience indicate undergirding ultimate principles. Principles cannot exist unless they make a difference in facts and since all facts are particular facts the "whole interest of the question of God's existence seems to me to lie in the consequences for particulars which that existence may be expected to entail".[8] James had formerly said that a need may call forth a postulate which would satisfy that need. He now is saying that empirical values point to ultimate truth.

The third stage in the development of James's conception of the Deity is a combination or synthesis of the other two positions. The religious experience opens for us possibilities that are breathtaking, "of another kind of happiness and power based on giving up our will and letting something higher work for us".[9] We become convinced that we are inhabitants of a larger and more inclusive spiritual environment from which we can get aid and our souls mysteriously become one with a larger soul whose instruments we are.

Accompanying this view of God as being the saving power to which we have access, God is also such that he calls forth our most active response. We live in a pluralistic world in which there are real losses and real achievements and we are stimulated to real effort. God is a part of world and

so is finite but this makes him more approachable and a more challenging leader and co-worker. Since God has an environment in time and is working out a history like ourselves "he escapes from the foreigness, from all that is human, of the static, timeless, perfect absolute".[10] We can enjoy an intimacy with God and our active natures are quickened by the realization that even as he aids us we can aid him.

In 1904, Professor James B. Pratt sent to James a questionnaire which he answered in detail. Some of the questions and answers which bear upon James's theism were as follows:

Question: What do you mean by God?
Answer: A combination of Ideality and (final) efficacy.

Q. Is He a person?
A. He must be cognizant and responsive in some way.

Q. Or is He only a force?
A. He <u>must</u> do.

Q. Or is God an attitude toward you?
A. Yes, but more conscious. "God", to me, is not the only spiritual reality to believe in. Religion means primarily a universe of spiritual relations surrounding the earthly practical ones, not merely relations of "value", but agencies and their activities....The other kinds of consciousness bear witness to a much wider universe or experience, from which our belief selects and emphasizes such parts as best satisfy our needs.

Q. Why do you believe in God? Is it
1. From some argument?
A. Emphatically, no.
2. Because you have experienced His presence?
A. No, but rather because I need it so that it "must" be true.

Q. Do you not so much believe in God as want to use Him?
A. I can't use him very definitely, yet I believe.

Q. Do you accept Him not so much as a real existent being, but rather as an ideal to live by?
A. More as a more powerful ally of my own ideals.[11]

Thus we see the two conceptions of God as Power and God as the inciter of our powers combined in James's final conception of God. God carries our ideals to completion and we share in his plans and purposes. At the same time we lean on him in our weakness, receiving his aid, and we share with him our own strength.

As to the nature of God, James's pluralism led him to a "piecemeal supernaturalism" which he frankly admits is a leaning toward polytheism. The universe is composed of many principles but we must hold that the divine principle which we call "God" is the supreme principle and the others are subordinate. Had James followed the implications of his pragmatism he would have been led to the position that God is an idea to be used but having no objective reality. He guarded against such a conclusion and insisted that all evidence points toward an objective agency which is active in religious experience.

God exists, or some power or powers exist and whether Deity be one or many, pluralism, pragmatism, and common sense demand that he be finite. "He works in an external environment, has limits, and has enemies".[12] Monism is indifferent to human values, interferes with freedom, and

is inconsistent with the existence of evil. God is "God" of things as they are,not as we should like to see them, and is only responsible for such things as he knows enough or has power enough to accomplish. There is a God but he is limited "either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once".[13]

It was the problem of the existence of evil which caused James to regard the 'omniscient' and 'omnipotent' God of theology as a "disease of the philosophy-ship". If God were powerful enough and good enough evil could never have entered the world and so either the 'power' or the 'goodness' must be given up and James prefers to sacrifice the power. The evil in this world is fearful and intolerable and "a God who can relish such superfluities of horror is no God for human beings to appeal to".[14] Evil has a final quality and no eternal ideal order can atone for the agony of suffering which men sometimes experience.

James uses other arguments for a finite God but his special emphasis is upon the possibility of intimacy between ourselves and a larger but still finite "other". God must be limited to be approachable and we must be able to share his purposes. This intimacy is a continuity of consciousness between God and man. A single field of consciousness shades off into larger fields which suggests a higher than human experience. We are "part and parcel of a wider self" and the contacts are continuous although we

do not always realize it. We are "confluent in a higher consciousness, and confluently active there, though we now know it not".[15] Religious experience points with reasonable probability toward this continuity of our limited consciousness with the larger spiritual environment.

This wider, spiritual consciousness is God. Limited, yet he is powerful enough to impart to us energy for our tasks and to lift us out of our disappointments and despairs. His life is like ours in that he struggles against his external environment and he can use us in the task of perfecting the universe. We are co-workers with Him and he is the source of our energy and at the same time "Power" itself. He helps us and enables us to help Him.

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

1. I have followed in outline the stages suggested by Dr. Bixler in Religion in the Philosophy of William James, p 122 ff.
2. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. I p 736-7.
3. The Will to Believe, p 122.
4. The Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture XX.
5. Ibid, p 508.
6. Ibid, p 508.
7. Ibid, p 517.
8. Ibid, p 522.
9. A Pluralistic Universe, p 305.
10. Ibid, p 318.
11. Letters, Vol. II, p 212-14.
12. A Pluralistic Universe, p 124.
13. Ibid, p 311.
14. Pragmatism, p 142.
15. A Pluralistic Universe, p 289-90.

PART THREE

CHAPTER EIGHT

Personal Faith and Character

To William James, religion was not so much an academic subject to be philosophical about, as something to be lived. Because of his sympathy and tolerance it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between his own faith and that of others which he respected and understood. It was a part of his creed that there should be many points of view and he was always reluctant to criticize any religion if its fruitage was good. He was nearer to the simple piety of the evangelical sects than to modern religious liberalism and he often, in a spirit of fun, mentioned his orthodoxy to his friends among the liberal clergy. When Borden Parker Bowne was tried for heresy because of his dismissal of the doctrine of conversion as unimportant, James gently chided him and suggexted that he (James) was the better Methodist of the two.[1]

As early as 1886, James expressed his interest in the simpler forms of religious faith. In a letter[2] he mentions a book entitled The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, written by a Quakeress, and commends its contents. "As you know", he wrote, "I am not a child of God after the fashion inculcated in this book, nor has the book given me any active impulse to become one. Yet strange to say it moves me, and makes me approve of it in the highest degree".

The approval is given to the fact that the book traces out the consequences of giving of one's will to God and the disapproval is James's inability to agree with the basic assumption. This interest in consequences, and criticism of assumptions is characteristic of James's religion.

James was afraid that his treatment of the extravagant and irrational aspects of religion would tend to confirm sceptics and disbelievers. However, such an emphasis was merely to prove the uniqueness of the religious experience and he was pointing to the fact that religion is an individual matter. It has to do with what goes on within a man and concerns the individual's ultimate needs, ideals, desolations, consolations, failures and successes. The unusual manifestation of religion points to its individualistic nature. Extreme cases sometimes bring into relief the characteristics which are distinctly a part of the religious emotion better than do the milder ones.

In a letter written in 1904, to Professor James H. Leuba,[3] James revealed his sense of incompleteness due to his lack of a definite and well defined religious experience. He felt that this lack kept him from having an adequate sense of God. He writes, "My personal position is simple. I have no living sense of commerce with a God. I envy those who have, for I know that the addition of such a sense would help me greatly. The Divine, for my <u>active</u> life, is limited to impersonal and abstract concepts which, as ideals, interest and determine me, but do so but faintly

in comparison with what a feeling of God might effect, if I had one."

Some of the answers which James made to Professor Pratt's questionnaire illustrate this thought:

Q. Why do you believe in God? Is it from some argument?
A. Emphatically, no.

Q. Or because you have experienced His presence?
A. No, but rather because I need it so that it "must" be true.

Q. Or is it from some authority, such as the Bible or some prophetic person?
A. Only the whole tradition of religious people, to which something in me makes admiring response.

Q. Or from some other reason?
A. Only for social reasons.

Q. Is God very real to you, as real as an earthly friend, though different.
A. Dimly (real); not (as an earthly friend).

Q. Do you feel that you have experienced his presence?
A. Never.

Q. If you have had no such experience, do you accept the testimony of others?
A. Yes! The whole line of testimony on this point is so strong that I am unable to pooh-pooh it away.

Q. Do you pray, and if so why?
A. I can't possibly pray--I feel foolish and artificial.

Q. What do you mean by religious experience?
A. Any moment of life which brings the reality of spiritual things "home" to one.[4]

In the same questionnaire James intimates that he is possessed of a "mystical germ" which enables him to respond sympathetically to the experience of others. In the letter to Leuba he also mentions his "mystical germ" which is able to withstand atheistic criticism and energetically combine

with interpretive criticism. On one occasion while vacationing in the Adirondacks, James experienced what he called "a state of spiritual alertness of the most vivid description".[5] He did not claim that he had felt God, but only that his experience enabled him to understand how other people might feel if they did feel God. If not a mystical experience it was at least a religious experience for it fits his own definition as a "moment of life which brings the reality of spiritual things 'home' to one".

The "mystical germ" seems to have meant an intense yet vicarious, interest in religious experience and a willingness to accept its data as fruitful in the search for truth. An imaginative interest in the experiences of others was, for James, the means of quickening his own religious life. As we have seen, the mystical experience has an objective implication which points toward truth. All knowledge including "scientific knowledge" depends upon accepting the deliverance of original experiences at face value. The religious experience is an experience of something, and as such is entitled to acceptance until disproven or modified by other original experiences.

The demand for the moral will was a characteristic element in the religion of James. For himself, he insisted upon the strenuous and heroic battle for the good against evil, but he realized the demands of the "sick-soul" which sought security and comfort. Both motives James understood vicariously and through his own temperament. That his

preaching of the martial spirit reflected his need, he was candid in admitting, for he knew "as well as anybody that he who verbally celebrates and glorifies a function writes himself down for the time being as one who doesn't exercise it, but aspires toward it".[6]

The other motive grew out of personal suffering and a sympathy with the needs of others. Since man is not always hardy, the gospel of pluralism does not always minister to his needs. The "sick-soul" cannot answer the call to battle and must be ministered unto.

James avoided affiliation with a church because he felt that religion lost much of its vitality when institutionalized. He found the forms of worship, as practiced by the church, neither natural nor agreeable. He was not interested in elaboration or specific formulation of religious belief but preferred to avoid dogmatism by keeping his creed in a plastic state. He regularly read the Bible to his own children but when asked if he believed in it's authority responded, "No, no, no. It is so human a book that I don't see how belief in its divine authorship can survive the reading of it."[7]

James believed in the immortality of the soul. He first defended the legitimacy of the belief but had slight personal interest in the doctrine. The address on Human Immortality was intended to show that immortality was not incompatable with psychological theories, yet his own personal interest was not keen.[8] In the Principles of Psychol-

ogy the possibility of survival is based upon the idea of continuance of value and is defended from that point of view but the defense is highly impersonal.[9]

As James grew older, the interest became crystalized into conviction. In the Varieties immortality is considered a secondary point.[10] In 1904, James said that his belief had never been keen but was growing stronger as he grew older chiefly because he was just becoming fit to live.[11] In 1906, he expressed the belief that his friend Richard Hodgson who had recently passed away was "energizing somewhere". By this time he had come to feel that death, if it is final, is out of keeping with other aspects of life and is an unintelligible negation of goodness. In 1909, referring to Professor F. J. Child he wrote: "I have often said that the best argument I know for an immortal life was the existence of a man who deserved one as well as Child did".[12]

James regarded religion as the most important and most inclusive interest of his life. Not only for himself personally, but for mankind as a whole it was life's most imperative function. His mind was continually turning to and examining religious questions. He began his career as a physiologist; turned to the examination of the human mind; and then dropped psychology to give his energy to philosophical speculation. His philosophy found its justification and culmination in the philosophy of religion which was, for him, a gospel to live by.

An examination of the character of William James reveals a many-sided personality. He was never physically well and inclined to neurasthenia but his shortcoming drove him to prodigious effort. He constantly complained of his limitation but there is a wide discrepancy between the incapacity of which he speaks and his record of achievements. As his energy, both physical and mental, was constantly being expended he suffered often from overwork but always refused to spare himself.

He was always restless and impatient, tiring of a piece of work long before it was finished and feeling a revulsion toward it after it was finished. His sister, Alice, described as being, "like a blob of mercury", never having the inclination to stick long at any one task.[13] This oscillation was characteristic of James and reflected the quick shifts of his scintillating mind. To a lesser character this would have precluded the possibility of worthwhile achievement but the alchemy of his genius transmuted handicaps into tools of usefulness.

The outstanding trait of James's character was his capacity for warm, deep and lasting friendships. He loved people and brought pleasure and joy to all who came into contact with him. He took the initiative in making friendships and often translated his affection into glowing words of love and trust. No barrier of race, creed or color was allowed to make itself felt for in each person he unerringly found something which aroused his admiration. The warmth

of such friendship brought to him many lasting friends which he cherished and cultivated.

James was a brilliant conversationalist with an abundant flow of wit and wisdom, regarding conversation as a joyful recreation as capable of refinement as any other art. He also knew how to listen to others and was always happy when talking with those who disagreed with himself. Laughter was a major activity whenever James was present either among friends or in his own home. Gayety and elaborate nonsense as well as an ability to make pleasant fun of himself as well as others made him a delightful and much sought after companion.

Behind this capacity for friendship was an understanding sympathy. His unselfishness grew out of his preoccupation with other people's problems and view-points. The sorrows of the "sick-soul", the abnormal and the sufferer were carried upon his own overburdened feelings yet never with morbidness. His sympathy for animals was so strong that it was almost a physical reaction. His pleasure of mountain driving was largely destroyed by his feeling for the horses on long upward climbs. Although he delighted in experimentation and felt that the dogs in the physiological laboratory would readily acquiesce, if they fully understood, he was haunted by the feeling that the meaning of future good must remain beyond the sacrificial victim's ken.[14]

In spite of all his gayety and good humor James exceed-

ed most men in his sense of responsibility. He felt responsible for his students, his friends, and others with whom he came into contact. In a real sense he felt responsible for the world itself and refused to avail himself of his philosopher's privilege to sit on the sidelines and watch the world pass by. "I can't bring myself, as so many men seem able to do, to blink the evil out of sight, and gloss it over....It must be accepted and hated."[15]

James was possessed of an intellectual as well as moral conscience. Even in his early student days he had a reverence for truth and his philosophical heroes were men whom he believed to be intellectually honest and fearless. He did not object to wishful thinking but he did resent it being represented as something else. Empiricism was the only philosophy for him because he felt that it was candid and open-minded. His conscience drove him to curb his natural restlessness and turn his mind with indefatigable industry toward solving hard and complex problems.

A man of bold indescretions, easy manners, and a cosmopolitan backbround, James delighted in ridiculing other people yet he never strayed beyond the bounds of good taste. His breeding gave that sense of security which permits liberties. He took liberties with others but always in such a wholesome way that no offense was ever taken. His liberties with the English language invested the language with a new and more meaningful authority. He associated with strange characters but did

not lose caste, or compromise his dignity. He could also "walk with kings nor lose the common touch". In short, here was a man who might easily have gone to either extreme but owing to his innate sense of fitness he never made a fool of himself.

James took life seriously. The gay moments enabled him to find reserves of strength with which to carry on the battle. Philosophy testifies to the seriousness of the situation which we face; the moral consciousness calls us to the battle; and religion tells us that our efforts shall not be in vain. Meaning is to be found in life but a superficial or complacent survey will never uncover it. Only when we have lived deeply, thought accurately, felt strongly, and trusted completely do we reach below the surface and catch a glimpse of those things which are ultimate. James loved to repeat, "Som of Man stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee" and in so doing he was unconsciously testifying to the fact that he had already answered the challenge.

PART THREE

NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, p 330-1.
2. Bixler, J. S., Religion in the Philosophy of William James, p 193.
3. Letters, Vol. II, p 211.
4. Ibid, Vol. II, p 212-15.
5. Ibid, Vol. II, p 77.
6. Quoted from a previously unpublished letter, by Perry, Thought and Character, Vol. II, p 272.
7. Letters, Vol. II, p 215.
8. Human Immortality, p 3.
9. Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, p 348-9.
10. Varieties, p 524.
11. Letters, Vol. II, p 214.
12. Proceedings of the American Society of Psychical Research, 1909, p 580--quoted by Bixler, J. S., Religion in the Philosophy of William James, p 155.
13. Letters, Vol. I, p 289.
14. Will to Believe, p 58.
15. Letters, Vol., I, p 158.

PART THREE

CHAPTER NINE

Concluding Comments

During the past few decades religion has rapidly been losing the preeminent place which it once held in the thinking of educated men and women. Scientific discoveries have called into question theological ideas, and as a result two extreme points of view have developed. Some cling tenaciously to the past--unwilling to make adaptation to the modern scene--pathetic in the zeal which they give to a lost cause. On the other hand there are those who have repudiated religion in its entirety, after finding a few points of weakness. Between these two extremes the theologians of today are trying to reconstruct religious thought.

The problem of the reconstruction of theology is twofold. A philosophy of religion must, first of all, be intellectually defensible. The values of religion can never be made to appeal to the modern mind unless they can meet the exacting test of reasonableness. The scholastics of the middle ages were able to divorce philosophy and revelation but for us the first question regarding any doctrine is of its philosophical validity.

In the second place, religion must be emotionally satisfying or it will be unable to meet the needs of its adherents. Faith must furnish an emotional motivation and minister to deep-seated human needs or, regardless of its in-

tellectual content, it is sterile and unwanted. The present low ebb in religion is, to a large extent, due to the fact that it has not been properly balanced between these two demands.

The philosophy of William James is one which restores proportions. He tested ideas both intellectually and emotionally and rejected those which failed to measure up to either criterion. Because his thought was never systematized it is permissible to select from among his doctrines without doing violence to his entire thought. Using this method, it is possible to build an adequate philosophy of religion upon his teachings, which will meet the exacting demands of contemporary thinking.

Speculative theology has been largely dominated by rationalism but as James pointed out rationalism leads to loose thinking in that it assumes much more than is demonstrable. The modern method is the method of observation and experimentation rather than the older a priori method. Speculation is the elaboration or elucidation of a hypothesis and when both the method and the content of thought is assumed we are on doubly dangerous ground.

On the other hand an empirical approach to theology gives us a sense of security for we can not only draw our hypotheses from experience but we can test them by other experiences. If theology is to be regarded as scientific it must desert rationalism and align itself with empiricism. James was the pioneer in pointing out this necessary advance

and in proving that the materialism of the earlier empiricism was illogical and ill-founded.

There must be, however, one basic assumption or knowledge is not even possible. We must recognize that there is a structural relationship between the knowing mind and the object known. This can, despite the claims of the rationalists, best be assumed on the grounds of experience itself. From the rationalists' view this relationship between subject and object involves idealism of one sort or another. Berkeley proved that idealism could not be refuted because of the "ego-centric perdicament" but it is dangerous to press this argument for Hume's solipsism is the logical result.

By pointing out that activity and originality are characteristics of the mind, James was able to find an explanation of the structural relationship between the mental and extra-mental world and thus avoid idealism. His empiricism furnishes the starting point from which the new theology can sally forth to regain lost prestige.

Pragmatism, under another name, has long been used by exponents of religion to test the validity of ideas. James avoided the error of the "instrumentalists" by his insistence that true ideas are representations of that which exists objectively. If we accept his definition of truth as being a property of ideas rather than of reality, then his position is unassailable. However, this makes truth subjective and relative and such a doctrine is inadequate for religious faith.

The religious life is a life of commitment while the pragmatic method is tentative in as far as it states conclusions. This does not vitiate pragmatism entirely but it does limit its field of operation. The religious philosopher must arrive at his beliefs by another route and then apply the pragmatic test to them. This does not mean that the theologian can indulge in dogmatism for that would be contrary to his basic empiricism. It does imply, however, that the conviction reached at any given point in experience, after being subjected to the pragmatic test, can be used as a basis for further action. It must be expected that this further action may require a modification of the initiating conviction. In this way it will be possible to make a temporary complete commitment while leaving the future open to change and adjustment.

Pluralism, if carried to its logical extreme, leads to polytheism while monism implies pantheism. If we must choose between these contending positions, religion will do well to align itself with the pluralistic view. A dualistic ontology is the position of compromise and as such it appeals to many of the leading thinkers of today. However, if we are willing to admit a duality there is no reason why we should not go further and see the world as many.

There are objections to both positions but pluralism, while not giving the same sense of security as monism, has three decided advantages. It accounts for the fact of evil in the world, for in monism evil and good are ultimately the

same thing. This is contrary to our experience and encourages moral laxity and indifference. In the second place, pluralism makes possible human freedom and gives freedom an opportunity to help work out the destiny of the world. Finally, as James pointed out, pluralism gives the religious man a feeling of intimacy with God while still retaining his individuality.

Because of insufficient evidence the intellect cannot always decide moral and religious matters. In such cases James's "right" to believe is not only permissible but is necessary. Faith is always a venture into the unknown for it goes into regions where reason has not yet gone or cannot go. The believing will is not contradictory of reason for it goes only in the direction which has been previously indicated by reason. If voluntary belief goes in an opposite direction then it nullifies itself, but when it follows the pathway of known facts to the end, and then proceeds alone, it is not only legitimate but is indispensable. An adequate philosophy of religion must needs make a large place for the Jamesian "will to believe". This is empiricism, for the responses of the emotions are as truly experienced as are those of reason.

The Jamesian philosophy furnished the basis for an interpretation of religious experience. Whether mystical or non-mystical the experiences of religion are real and must be considered as data on a par with other experiences. Religion goes deeper than reason and so cannot be subjected to the intellect. Reason follows after the experience and

interprets what is prior to itself so it becomes a denial of empiricism for the reason to claim sovereignty over the religious experience.

James's theory of subliminal consciousness is the best explanation of mysticism which has yet been suggested, and his tests of "moral helpfulness", "immediate luminousness", and "philosophical reasonableness", are above question. If the mystic can feel that he is in touch with an "other" outside himself, and then will subject his experience to the three tests to determine its degree of validity, he has a right to be heard. In the past, religion has often been brought into disrepute because of the excessive and uncontrolled indulgence of undiscerning mystics. With proper safeguards such experiences can lead us far along the road in the search for truth.

An empirical theology furnishes a corrective to the tendency to make religious belief entirely the result of ratiocination. Probably few men have ever come to a belief in God as a result of an argument to prove his existence. The historical moral, cosmological, teleological, and ontological arguments have followed rather than preceded the belief and an examination of the evidence will indicate that each of these could as easily be used to prove God's non-existence. The more recent idealistic argument also breaks down unless the idealistic position can first be established. In like manner the various arguments for immortality may be disposed of.

Kant postulated God and immortality as being necessary to counterbalance the seeming irrationality of the world. His mistake was in assuming that rationality must, of necessity, exist. The empiricist will base his beliefs upon experience as far as experience will go and then his believing will, based on desire, will carry him on. In the final analysis, the only argument for the existence of God, which will bear the weight of our faith, is that we have experienced Him and we need and desire Him.

The idea of a limited God will be abhorrent to many people because it is so at variance with traditional theism. Many have been willing to make God self-limited in order to make room for human freedom but this idea has no basis in experience and is self-contradictory. If the evidence for God lies in experience then we must conceive God in such a manner that experience may be rendered intelligible. The only answer is found in a limited and striving God. The idea of an infinite God not only contradicts experience but is also inadequate for religious faith.

The first contradiction is found in the fact that a concept of God as being supreme in power and goodness does not agree with the experience of evil in the world. Some evil can be explained as being the inevitable result of human freedom. Other evils are transmuted into good so ultimately are not evil. However these explanations do not cover natural evils such as earthquakes, cyclones, and disease germs. We are face to face with the fact that we

must deprive God of either his supreme goodness or his supreme power and the demands of religion and of experience indicate that His power must be sacrificed.

A further denial of the power of God is found in the teleological view of the universe. Kant recognized this fact but discarded it because it did not fit his presupposed idea of God. Edgar Sheffield Brightman, the leading exponent today of a limited God, makes much of this argument in his Adams lectures delivered at Boston University and subsequently published under the title, The Problem of God. If we hold that this world indicates a design which is the result of purpose, then the facts of evolution prove that the design has been achieved with great difficulty. In the evolutionary sequence nature has been wasteful and each upward step has been gained with difficulty. Personality has evolved but disease germs and harmful parasites also have evolved. It is sheer madness to claim that this is the best of all possible worlds for it is easy to conceive of one which would be more hospitable to personality. It is far truer to say that this is the best world possible due to the fact that God is working under difficulties imposed by His own external environment.

On the positive side of the picture, a limited God offers an object of devotion for religious faith unequalled by traditional theism. The Greek philosophers saw the impossibility of an intimate relationship between perfec-

tion and imperfection so they sought to find an intermediary to explain the relationship between God and man. A limited God makes such devices unnecessary and God and man have fellowship with each other. Then too, in the moral battle man is fighting on God's side and the ultimate fate of the universe itself depends, to a degree, on man's co-operation with God. It is hard to conceive of omnipotence having desire and a God who does not desire man can never be reached by human desire alone.

With these elements--an empirical approach, a limited use of pragmatism, a pluralistic ontology, and legitimate voluntary belief--it would be possible to build a theology which would be satisfying both from the intellectual and emotional points of view. James points out to us the method by which religion can again come into its own. Here are the possibilities of an adequate philosophy of religion awaiting a theologian who will make them articulate.

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